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[PRICE ONE PENNY



[THE OLD PEDLAR.]

SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER.

CHAPTER I.

She was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all. *Byron.*

On a beautiful sanded beach, situate in one of our northern counties, stood, some thirty years ago, the small but picturesque village of Silverstone. The village itself comprised about twenty cottages, mostly tenanted by fishermen, who found in the broad and spacious bay to the right a safe and convenient anchorage for the crafts in which they plied their calling.

The night preceding the opening of our story had been wild and stormy; but the storm had passed away and the morning was radiant now in sunshine.

Long before eight o'clock groups of fishermen were busy at their doors, repairing nets, while others again were in boats overhauling sails and rigging, and getting things in general order for the night's work.

Far down the beach, and almost to the water's edge, were seated a group of four persons, two of them young men employed in patching up some old sails, the other two girls of the tender ages of eighteen and nineteen respectively, who, busy plying their knitting-needles, were also taking part in a very lively conversation with their companions.

"Well," said John Harland, "whether you believe it or not, Marian, it is nevertheless true. You may laugh, both of you. Indeed, it would be too much to expect that young ladies brought up in the city would believe anything of the kind."

"Nonsense," said Marian Delarme, the elder of the two girls, a beautiful blonde, with large blue eyes as clear as a crystal spring and a mass of golden hair which fell in wavy tresses over her shoulders. "Nonsense, John Harland. We never said we

doubted your word. But pray give us the particulars. I am sure Bernice will listen to the story with all the attention in the world."

"Yes, yes," answered her sister. "Go on, John. If you only knew how I adore the marvellous, you would proceed at once, and not keep me in suspense."

There was a mock seriousness in the girl's air which made John Harland's brother burst out in a ringing peal of laughter.

The two young fishermen were stout, well-built fellows, with an honest artlessness in their frank, manly faces which made a favourable impression on one at first sight.

There was little difference in the ages of the brothers, though Harry Harland was the younger, taller and handsomer of the two, and possessed a decidedly more intellectual cast of features than his brother. His hair was as black as a raven's wing, while his large hazel eyes sparkled with kindness and pleasantry.

"Do go on, John," urged Marian, while a smile like a sunbeam flitted over her beautiful face, "do go on. We are dying to hear this marvellous story of yours."

"Very well," answered John, "laugh at me or not as you will, you shall hear it; and for its truth I will vouch my existence. Are you all listening?"

"Yes, yes," answered Marian and Bernice in a breath.

"Then here goes," said John, wearing a ridiculous gravity, which made his listeners almost choke with inward merriment. "I was passing old Blackrock Tower one morning, just between three and four o'clock, in our fishing-smack, when, on turning a point in the cliffs, and pretty close in shore, what should sweep past me in the air but a great black object about the size of an ordinary fishing-boat. I was so startled for a moment that I closed my eyes to shut out the horrid sight; and when I opened them again I saw it disappear through the ruined gateway of the old tower where the doctor lives—"

"Ah! ha! and was that all, John?" cried the two sisters.

"No, that was not all," replied the young man, much abashed at their laughter, "for I saw a light from the windows of Blackrock Tower."

Marian burst out in another ringing peal, in which she was joined both by Harry and Bernice.

"I told you that you would laugh at me," said Harland, turning scarlet at the ridicule to which he was subjected. "You no doubt think I was dreaming or something of the kind."

"Come, come," said Bernice, speaking up, "I think you are rather too hard on Cousin John. You know as well as I do that when Dame Barnett was dying of old age and rheumatism they sent to Blackrock to ask the doctor if she would recover. He told them 'no,' although he had never seen her in his life; and did she not die the very next night?"

"But then is he not a doctor?" put in her sister, with an innocent tone of raillery; "and what on earth is the use of a doctor if he can't tell one that much?"

"But he never practises," remonstrated Bernice. "In my humble opinion he is no more a doctor than you are."

John Harland looked up with somewhat more confidence now and cast a glance of tender acknowledgment at his pretty defender.

"The point is soon settled," said Harry, casting his eyes towards the bay, "for yonder is a boat coming up from Blackrock with an old man in it very like the doctor."

They all turned their eyes to the point indicated by Harry Harland's finger, and, sure enough, there was a solitary old man seated in the stern sheets.

The young men suspended their work on the instant, and watched the approach of the boat with no little awe and uneasiness.

On it came over the rippleless bosom of the bay, seemingly propelled by no human hand, until it shot into a small landing-place some two hundred yards to the right of Harry Harland and his companions.

"Well, I declare," said John, as he saw the little



old man rise from the stern sheets and leap to the shore, "if it isn't old Mark Langton. I wonder what brings him here."

"His sham jewellery, of course," said Bernice, smilingly. "Old Mark Langton doesn't go to large cities for nothing. Ah, did I not tell you?" she cried, in great glee, as she saw the old man take a small mahogany box from the boat. "We will have his stock in trade here in a minute or two—diamonds, earrings and what not."

Her auditors hailed this sally with a loud shout of merriment, and the hawk in jewellery waiting but an instant to secure his boat, came towards them over the sanded beach with a shuffling gait denoting a ripe old age.

"Good morning, ladies," cried he, coming up. "Anything in my line this morning—watches, brooches, wedding-rings, or earrings? New assortment, just from London, and a perfect marvel in cheapness, I assure you."

"You don't mean to tell us," said John Harland, "that you have been to London since we last saw you?"

"Perhaps Mr. Langton makes his journeys on the old orthodox witch's broom," said Bernice, with raillery.

"Ah, ha, ha!" laughed old Langton, heartily. "The young ladies will have their jokes, won't they? Mr. Harland? But, laying jokes aside for the present, buy Miss Bernice a nice pair of earrings, or, what is still better," pursued the old man, "a charming wedding-ring! I wonder what you ladies are about that you are not married. Come! here is the best and cheapest assortment of jewellery you have ever seen."

"As for marrying," put in John, blushing deeply, "there are two to make a bargain of that kind, Mr. Langton."

John Harland cast a look of genuine tenderness at Bernice, who, however, did not appear to notice it, for she said the next instant:

"I am waiting until you are a widow, Mr. Langton. I shall never marry another so long as there is a chance of yourself."

"Nonsense!" cried the good-natured dealer. "Away with your jokes, Miss Bernice, for there stands a lad who is dying in love with you. But I know it will be all right some day. Now tell me," added the vendor, "what were you laughing at when I came up?"

"You can't guess," laughed Bernice.

"No, that I can't."

"Well, then, we will tell you," said Marian, breaking in upon the conversation. "We mistook you for the old doctor of Blackrock Tower."

"Ah, ha!" laughed the others in concert, "it was a nice take in, was it not?"

"I am glad at all events that you took me for a decent man," replied Mark Langton. "But that puts me in mind that I have a little business at Blackrock to-day. No, no, it is not in the jewellery line; besides, it's a confidential matter, and as such ought not to be spoken of. But here comes Mrs. Delarme. I wonder would she like anything in the jewellery line?"

At this moment came up from a cottage, some distance in the rear, a fine-looking woman of from forty to forty-five.

"Good morning, Mrs. Delarme," saluted the dealer. "Hope to see you well this morning, ma'am. Anything in my line to-day? I have a new assortment, just arrived from London, of watches, brooches, and earrings—all marvellously cheap, ma'am. It will be worth your while to look at them, even though you don't purchase."

Mark Langton opened his box with alacrity, and the widow, after some conversation, selecting a brooch for herself and a pair of earrings for Bernice, paid for them.

John and Harry also bought some trifling presents for the girls; then the dealer in jewellery shut to the lid of his box, well satisfied with his good fortune.

"There's nothing like the old people after all," said Mark, when Mrs. Delarme had passed into the cottage with her two daughters. "If it hadn't been for that good lady I shouldn't have sold a penny-worth."

"Well, thank your lucky stars that you have done so well," said Harry, sarcastically. "If we were only as lucky with our courtship as you are with your gewgaws we'd be right enough."

"Bless the man! what does he mean?" said Langton, elevating his eyebrows with astonishment. "Are you not the accepted lovers of Marian and Bernice Delarme? Why, it's the talk of all the country round!"

A bitter smile came into Harry Harland's face for the first time.

"I wish," he cried, "that the country would let matters alone that doesn't concern them. I tell you

what, Mark Langton, I don't know how John feels, but I—I am the most miserable fellow in existence. You are about as likely to marry Marian Delarme as I am!"

The old man raised his brows in greater astonishment than ever.

"Why," he cried, "I took you to be the happiest fellow in all the world not ten minutes ago! How comes this change? You have not quarrelled with Miss Marian, have you?"

"No, no," said Harry, hurriedly; "Heaven forbid! Then what's gone wrong? Upon my good faith, I can't understand it!"

"You will understand it soon enough," said the young man, almost fiercely. "There is a heaviness here, Mark Langton, that no one knows but myself. John may answer your question if he likes, but I cannot."

The vendor in jewellery now turned for an explanation to the other, while the younger brother strode off with a gloomy countenance towards his father's cottage.

"Come, John," said Mark, "what is the cause of all this unhappiness? There's something in the wind that's not right. What is it?"

The young man looked anxiously in the direction his brother had gone; but Harry had already disappeared within the cottage.

"You have asked me the cause of all this unhappiness, Mr. Langton," said John, approaching the old man until he had got within whispering distance of him. "You have asked me this, and I will tell you. Harry has got a rival in the affections of Marian Delarme."

"A rival! Surely you are mistaken," cried Langton, in a tone of genuine surprise. "Who in all Silverstone would dare go between Harry Harland and his promised bride?"

"Well, nobody exactly in Silverstone," replied John; "but there are others out of Silverstone who might. That's what's the trouble, Mark; and I am sorry for it, at least for Harry's sake."

"The boy is right," muttered old Langton, striding up and down the beach, uneasily. "Harry Harland is impetuous, and who knows but some trouble may be the result of this foolish misbehaviour? I love the lad as my own son, and if I can do anything for him why I shall do it. I must find out who this rival is. Now, John, tell me this," the old man said, pausing abruptly in front of Harland, "who is this rival?"

It was about a minute before the young man spoke, and when he did it was not without considerable hesitation.

"Well, the truth of the matter is this," John said, sinking his eyes to the ground; "the young squire has been coming about here rather often than he used to do, and Harry, who is an honourable lad, is not too well pleased with it either."

Mark Langton laughed. "Oh, that's it, is it?" he said. "How foolish Harry must be to take notice of such a thing. I thought the lad had better sense. Come, John, do you think the young lady's to be led away by one so far above her in rank as the squire?"

"Well, if she was, she wouldn't be the first one," replied the young man, gloomily. "But she may do as she likes. It will never be Harry that'll upbraid her for it; nor, for that matter, his brother either."

"Come, John," said old Langton, cheerfully, "you are making a mountain out of a molehill. If I liked a lass I'd go in and win her in spite of twenty squires. I wish Harry Harland was here now, and I'd give him a lesson he wouldn't forget in a hurry. But hush! here comes your father and a servant from the manor with him. I should like to know what's in the wind now, for trouble, if my old eyes don't deceive me, seems to sit heavily on both of them."

As he ceased speaking Laurence Harland, a stalwart, broad-shouldered fisherman of between fifty and sixty, accompanied by a servant from Silverstone Manor, drew up on the spot on which they were standing.

"Good day, Mr. Langton," said Laurence Harland. "I did not expect to see you here. But here's a gentleman from the Manor, John," he added, turning and addressing his son, "who has been sent here in quest of the young squire."

"What should we know of the squire?" cried John, impetuously. "We are not supposed to look after the young gentleman, are we?"

"Hush, John!" interrupted his father, "A civil question is worth a civil answer. Now pay attention. Master Stanhope has not been home since yesterday morning, and the old gentleman, his father, is very anxious about him."

"Oh, it's very likely he'll turn up," said John Harland, indifferently; "young gentlemen of his sort don't stray very far nor stay away very long from the paternal roof either. Perhaps he took an ex-

ursion to Blackrock Tower and last night's storm prevented his return."

"We thought he had gone on some such excursion at first," said the servant, "but we have reason to suspect since that he has not been near Blackrock; and, what is still worse, his hat has been discovered at the edge of one of the cliffs."

John Harland turned very pale as he heard this. "Could any one have waylaid him?" was his first thought.

"It looks very serious," said Laurence Harland, turning round and addressing himself to the Jeweller. "What do you think of it, Mark Langton, you who are so long-headed and have been knocking about the world for so many years?"

"Well, Mr. Harland," answered old Mark, modestly, and after a moment's thought, "I think the matter, like yourself, to be a very serious one; and the best thing to be done now would be to organize a search for him."

"That is exactly the opinion of my master," the servant added, quickly, "and the following precisely his instructions; I was to first make all the inquiry possible for him, and if I could then get no tidings, to ask the men of Silverstone to come up to the manor so that Mr. Bainbridge might organize them into searching parties."

"A good idea," said Laurence Harland.

"Then you will come, Mr. Harland?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the fisherman, with alacrity. "I am ready to start this moment. Run, John," he added, addressing his son, "and get the men together. I'll warrant when they know what it is for they will be glad enough to come with us. Ah, here is Mrs. Delarme and her daughters! The best thing you can do now, Mr. Langton, is to attend to them. And the sturdy fisherman turned away from the hawk to give directions to his son and the men who had been drawn by his summons to the spot.

The news soon spread through the assemblage that Stanhope Bainbridge had disappeared, and that foul play was suspected.

"Come, Harry, John," cried Laurence Harland to his two sons, "bestir yourselves, get a coil of rope, for during the necessary when we reach the cliffs. Ah, what's wrong with Marian? By Heavens, she has fainted!"

It was indeed so; the young girl had fallen prone on the beach.

CHAPTER II.

Strenuous words; the grief that does not

speak
Whisper the o'erfraught heart and bids it
break. *Shakespeare.*

SILVERSTONE HALL, to which we shall now conduct the reader, stood on a rather rocky eminence, distant about a mile or a mile and a half from the picturesque little fishing village referred to in the preceding chapter. It was owned and resided in by Squire Bainbridge, Stanhope's father, and was said to have been erected in the latter part of the sixteenth century; but, however true this may be, it was certain that the old manor house possessed the quaintest style of architecture in the whole county—embellished with the most grotesque carving within, and flanked on the outside by two square and massive towers, which looked down with a kind of sullen and gloomy grandeur upon the bay.

The old hall always wore a dreary and even desolate appearance. Perhaps this was due in a measure to the bleak tract of land that surrounded it, and on which there was an absence of trees, and very few shrubs to enliven it into anything like cheerfulness.

The present proprietor of Silverstone Hall was considerably past middle-age and had been the younger of two sons. His elder brother had mysteriously disappeared some twenty years before, and on the death of his father, who had attained the hale old age of four-score, the manor with all its belongings fell into the hands of the present proprietor, Adam Bainbridge, the now Squire of Silverstone.

In the course of time Mr. Bainbridge married, but his wife unhappily died in giving birth to an only son, and in this child the old squire's whole soul was bound up.

This was Stanhope Bainbridge, for whom the search had been got up; he was now between the ages of two and three-and-twenty, a high-spirited, handsome young fellow, who by his courage and daring had endeared himself to the whole population of Silverstone.

It was drawing towards the afternoon of the day on which our story opens that Squire Bainbridge was pacing uneasily up and down one of the gloomy apartments of the old hall, waiting, with a terrible dread at his heart, for news of his son.

While he was immersed in his most bitter reflections the door of the room slowly opened, and a gentleman entered, exclaiming as he did so:

"Good morning! Mr. Bainbridge; I hope you are well, sir."

The new-comer was evidently a privileged character about the hall. He was a young man of from twenty-eight to thirty years, tall, broad-shouldered, with a frank, open countenance, which evinced great good-humour, combined with no little determination of character.

"Well enough in body, I thank you, Ronald," the squire answered, looking up as his visitor entered; "but troubled enough in mind, I regret to say."

"What!" the other said, "I hope nothing has gone wrong with any of your investments?"

"No," the squire returned, gloomily; "the failure of one or all of my investments would have little effect upon me, thank Heaven! But there is something—something far worse," he added, with a quivering lip.

"Good Heavens! has anything then befallen Stanhope?" cried the young man, turning pale.

"That is, alas! of what I am afraid," replied Adam Bainbridge, with a heavy sigh. "My poor boy went out yesterday morning, and has not returned since—a thing he never did before. But what gives me the greatest concern is the circumstance of his hat being discovered at the edge of one of the cliffs. I fear it is a very serious affair, Mr. Hamilton."

"Oh, don't say that," cried the young man, with expressions of the profoundest sympathy. "Let us hope that your suspicions are groundless. In the meantime have you instituted any inquiry?"

"I have—all that was possible," said the squire, almost tearfully, "and I only now await the return of one of my servants, whom I despatched to the village to ask the men to come up here. And here he comes!"

Both turned to a window and looked out upon the courtyard.

The ring of a horse's hoofs was heard outside, and shortly afterwards a knock for admittance was given at the door.

"Come in!" cried the squire, impatiently. "What news have you?" he quickly added, as the messenger entered.

"None, sir," the servant answered, with a gloomy countenance. "But the men from the village have already got here."

"And by whom are they led?" asked Adam Bainbridge, restraining the agitation he felt by an effort.

"By Laurence Harland, sir."

"A good man and true," said the squire. "And now you may go, John, and thanks for the despatch you have used. My poor, poor son!" he faltered out, as the servant, after bowing, left the room.

A few minutes later the two gentlemen proceeded to the courtyard, where the villagers were assembled under Laurence Harland.

The party consisted of a dozen stout fishermen, whose looks betokened a lively sympathy for the squire in his supposed misfortune, and who appeared to be one and all animated with a desire to serve him.

This was not indeed through any great love they bore Mr. Bainbridge, but rather consequent on the popularity of Stanhope himself, who, with two solitary exceptions, was beloved by all in Silverstone.

Having explained his reason for sending for them, and the cause of his anxiety for the safety of his son, Squire Bainbridge proposed that they should start at once for the spot on the cliffs where the young man's hat had been found, and afterwards take such steps as the leader should deem advisable for renewing the search.

This plan being agreed upon, Laurence Harland and his party at once set off for the coast, taking the nearest direction to the point indicated by Mr. Bainbridge, which was about two miles and a half from Silverstone Hall.

It was now an hour past noon, and the early promise of a fine day had been amply realized. The sun shone gloriously down and nature seemed to be in her most joyous mood, a striking contrast indeed to the melancholy errand upon which they were bent.

In a short time the sound of the sea breaking with its sad, weird voice upon the shore fell on their ears and sent an involuntary shudder through the old squire's frame. A quarter of an hour more and they reached the spot where the hat had been found.

At this point the cliffs rose precipitously to a height two hundred feet above the sea, which even in the calmest weather, owing to the swell that came from the open ocean, broke with thunderous violence among the great rocks which had from time to time accumulated at the bottom.

But the face of the cliffs was, fortunately, not quite perpendicular. A precarious footing afforded a means of descent almost to the water's edge. Besides this, a footpath led down on either side; but by taking any of these paths a long return journey round jutting

rocks and over great boulders was necessary, which in the present case would simply be a waste of time.

"Stanhope was here yesterday without doubt," said Mr. Bainbridge as the party drew up. "He had his fishing-rod with him, and in trying to clamber down the face of the cliffs may have missed his footing and fallen. He may be lying bruised and wounded, or even dead, somewhere among these rocks."

The old squire spoke with an unsteady voice, though he tried hard to repress the feelings of pain and horror which trembled about his heart.

"The only thing that now remains for us," continued Mr. Bainbridge, steadying his voice, "is to ascertain with as little delay as possible whether any of these conjectures be correct. How shall we proceed, Mr. Hamilton?"

Ronald Hamilton had accompanied the party to the cliffs.

"I am willing to do anything in my power," answered the young man, much affected. "But Harland will be able to judge what course it is best to pursue."

"Speak out, Laurence," said Mr. Bainbridge, turning to the old fisherman; "what is your advice?"

"Well, sir," answered Harland, "I have been trying to discover some trace of footstep leading down the face of the cliffs; but if there have been any the rain has effaced them. I think we might first of all halloo as loud as we can, and if Mr. Stanhope is only bruised, he will answer us, and his voice will guide us to where he is lying."

The suggestion of the old fisherman was tried. A wild shout resounded from the throats of over a dozen stalwart men, causing the rocks to ring again, then, amid the breathless silence that followed, they all listened to catch the faintest response that might come from below. But no answering voice greeted their eager ears. Again they repeated the shout, but with no better effect. All they could hear was the thunderous waters beneath.

"It's only a waste of time," said old Mr. Bainbridge, sadly. "We must search among the rocks, Harland."

"Very good, sir," said Laurence. "I will divide the men into three parties, two of which can take the paths and coming round the rocks to the foot of the cliffs, make a thorough search as they go along, while the third, by the aid of these ropes, can clamber down the face of the cliffs."

"A very good plan," said Ronald Hamilton. "It insures a complete search of the whole place."

"But certainly very hazardous to the third party," objected Mr. Bainbridge. "The recent rains have made the place alarmingly dangerous, and I should be unwilling, very unwilling indeed, to see any one risk his life for me in this matter."

A universal assurance that there was no danger, though in reality there was considerable, put an end to any further objections he might entertain.

"Oh, there is not the least danger, I assure you, Mr. Bainbridge," said Laurence Harland, for the last time, "and if you and Mr. Hamilton will only take charge of a party each, I and my sons here will perform the third duty."

Adam Bainbridge, however, was anxious to remain and share in the most dangerous part of the search; but the sturdy fisherman, representing to him that, unused as he was to such exploits, he would only hinder rather than assist them, made him agree to take charge of party number two.

This being settled upon and a division made among the men, the two parties went off on their separate routes, leaving old Laurence and his two sons to get down the face of the cliffs the best way they could.

The ropes were finally adjusted to three stakes driven deeply into the ground, a little way back from the edge of the rocks, leaving a distance of about ten yards between each; then with the coils over their arms they simultaneously began their descent.

"Now, lads, be very careful," said Laurence Harland to his two sons.

Nor was his warning unnecessary, for the footing was in some places precarious enough. At times one of them would put his foot upon what he deemed a firm enough stone, when down it would go with a thundering crash, dislodging others in its path and ending by splashing into the sea below.

The descent was necessarily slow. They could see on either side the two searching parties making their way over the rocks towards the spot immediately under them, and from the manner in which they were proceeding it was evident that they had been as unsuccessful as themselves. At length a shout from Harry Harland caused both his father and brother to make their way to him.

"Hilloa!" cried old Laurence testily, "what's the matter with you?"

"Look, father!"

He could see Harry now holding up something in his hand.

It was the part of a broken fishing-rod!

"I am afraid this but confirms the squire's worst fears," said the fisherman, sadly. "But let us take it with us nevertheless and continue our search."

Steadily they pursued their arduous task, but no farther discovery rewarded their pains. Arriving at the foot of the cliff at last, and wearied with the difficulties of their undertaking, they sat down to await the arrival of the others.

At length after nearly an hour's delay the searchers came up with sorrow and disappointment written in their countenances.

"Where did this come from?" said the old squire, with a look of anguish, as he recognized his son's fishing-rod.

"One of my boys picked it up among the rocks," answered Laurence, sorrowfully, "but although we made every search we could find nothing else."

"No trace whatever of a fallen body?" cried the old man. "Surely there would be some indications of that had my son really fallen over the rocks."

There was hope in the old man's voice now; but it soon died away when Ronald Hamilton said:

"You forget, Mr. Bainbridge, how much rain fell during the night. See, besides, the quantity of debris that is piled up here."

"My poor son! my poor son!" cried the old squire, for the first time giving way to his grief, and covering his face with his hands he turned away from the others, "I fear you are lost—lost for ever!"

And uttering these bitter and agonized words he wept like a child. The search was virtually over and the little party made the best of their way back to Silverstone.

CHAPTER III.

You never had a servant to whose trust
Your business was more welcome.

Shakespeare

OLD Langton, the jewel-vendor, after seeing Marian Delarme borne safely to her cottage, took up his box from the beach and pursued his journey to Blackrock.

"It is very strange," Mark muttered as he went along, "this disappearance of the young squire: Surely Harry Harland has had no hand in it? No, perish the thought! He's too good and honest a lad to go and waylay a man because he's a little bit jealous of him. Well, well," said old Mark, pausing in the middle of the road, "people do some queer things when they are jealous. But there! the young squire's uncle disappeared under even stranger circumstances—that's twenty years ago—and no one was jealous of him. There is something wrong somewhere, and I should like to find it out. Who knows but that strange chap in the tower may throw some light on the matter? I'll ask him at any rate."

Having given vent to this determination, Mark trudged on with a will, and was not long in arriving at his destination.

Blackrock Tower was a large round building situated on a jutting headland some three or four miles from Silverstone. It was enclosed by a wall on the landward side, which for many years had been in a state of ruinous decay, while the tower itself, until the present occupant took possession of it, was little better. However, the place had all along been regarded as haunted, and many stories of the supernatural order were sufficiently rife to satisfy the simple inhabitants of Silverstone that it was so. Nor had the present occupier made any more favourable impression on the people, for now that it was inhabited it got a worse name than ever. Stories went the rounds of the country that terrific noises were heard and strange lights seen burning from it at unseasonable hours; and through these reports Dr. Philander was held in about as much awe as his strange and ruinous abode. But to our story.

Mark Langton was soon within the grounds of the tower. The first object that met his eyes was a servant seated upon a stone bench.

"Hilloa!" cried Mark, depositing his box in the little courtyard; "how do you do?"

The nearness of the voice so startled the man that he leaped to his feet.

"Oh, it is you, is it, Mr. Langton?" he said, resuming his seat. "You nearly startled me out of a year's growth, my dear sir. But we expected you nevertheless, though not quite so early."

"Expected me!" cried the jewel-vendor, with some astonishment.

"Well, we knew at least of your being in the village," the man answered, "and of course having some messages for the doctor, I naturally thought you would come up to dine with us."

"Well, I have certainly no objection to that part of the programme," said Mark, good-humouredly. "But present business must be attended to. Is the doctor disengaged?"

"Remain here for an instant," said the servant, "and I'll inform him of your arrival."

He was not long gone, and when he returned, bidding Mark Langton to follow him, he ushered him into an apartment which was furnished in a style of luxuriance strangely at variance with the exterior of the building.

The room in which Mark Langton found himself now was the sitting-room of Doctor Philander himself. The rough inner walls had been lately renovated, and from them hung numerous and valuable paintings depicting many a romantic scene in Italy and Spain, and of other lands no less favoured. Around the apartment were placed low, divan-looking seats luxuriously cushioned, while chairs of every variety were arranged with seeming negligence, but so as to produce an artistic effect. The gorgeous carpet on the floor inspired old Mark with such respect for it that he paused for some seconds on the threshold before he could be persuaded to enter.

All this time the owner of the apartment, a little dark man, with a decidedly foreign cast of countenance, was seated at an open window, smoking a cigarette. He looked with a strange, peculiar smile at the jewel-vendor as he observed his hesitation.

"Come, come, Mr. Langton," he cried out, "don't be afraid; you are not going to spoil the carpet. Come in, my good sir. How are you?"

And he extended his hand, which the old jewel-vendor took, yet not without experiencing a considerable amount of awe.

"Oh, I am very well, thank you, sir," said Mark; "but a little wearied from the journey, to say the truth. I am not as young as I was once and I get tired sooner."

"No doubt," said Doctor Philander, blandly. "Take a chair, Mr. Langton. Will you take a little something? There is very good brandy on that sideboard—help yourself."

"I am very much obliged to you indeed, sir," said old Mark, filling for himself a good half-tumbler of the liquor. "And here's to your very good health, doctor."

"Thank you, Mark. And now let me see what you have brought me."

The jewel-vendor returned the tumbler to its place on the sideboard, then opening his box took out a small packet from it.

"I think you will find the articles all right, sir," said Mark Langton, handing the package over to Doctor Philander, but not without evincing a strange hesitancy as he brought his hand close to his.

The doctor was not without observing it too and a faint smile curled his lips.

He took the package, however, untied it, and minutely examined its contents.

"This is all right," he said, as he wrapped the packet carefully up again. "And now what is there to pay?"

"Well, here is the account, sir," said Mark, handing him over a small slip of paper upon which the various articles were written down; "and when I deal with a gentleman like you I leave it to himself what he'll give me for my trouble."

Doctor Philander took out his purse and after counting over some pieces of money handed him the amount.

The old hawk's eyes sparkled for a moment with genuine pleasure as he weighed the glittering gold pieces in his hand preparatory to transferring them to his pocket.

"Many thanks, sir," he said. "I didn't expect so much as this; and I hope it will not be long ere you give me another such order. Would you like to look at my new stock, doctor?" he added, reopening his box. "New imports in the way of jewellery from London, and all at reasonable rates."

"No, thank you," said Philander, smiling at the eagerness with which the old jewel-vendor exposed his goods. "I am quite supplied at present. Have you any news with you?"

"Ay, ay, doctor, sad, very sad news," replied Mark, shutting down the lid of his box. "There was a most unpleasant stir in Silverstone this morning. The young squire has disappeared."

"Indeed," replied the doctor. "Have they got any information of him yet, do you know?"

"Well, just before I left Silverstone the squire's servant came up to get the men together, and that was the first the villagers heard of it. Poor Marian Delarme fainted away at the intelligence, and there was a sad time of it altogether in the village."

"What has Marian Delarme to do with it?" asked Doctor Philander. "It is not possible that she is in love with young Bainbridge?"

"Ah, that is what I very much fear, sir," the jewel-vendor answered.

"She must be mad to aspire to one so far above her in rank."

"And, what is worse, turning her back on as good and honest a lad as ever breathed. It is a sad

affair, sir, all through," said Mark Langton, sighing heavily.

"You are getting sentimental, Mark," said Doctor Philander, with a laugh. "But, come, you start for Silverstone again towards evening, do you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, do me the favour to call on Laurence Harland on your way, and ask him to come over to Blackrock—if possible to-night."

"I will do that, sir. Anything else?"

"No other, thank you. But hark ye," cried Doctor Philander, as the hawk was leaving the room, "deliver my message to Laurence Harland in private, as I don't care to have my affairs made the talk of Silverstone. My name is in bad repute enough there as it is."

"Never fear, sir," said Mark Langton, "they'll know nothing from me, I assure you."

"I rely on you. And now you may go and get some refreshment before starting out."

Saying which the doctor, with a wave of his hand, dismissed him.

The result of the searching expedition brought a gloom over the simple inhabitants of Silverstone. They spoke in subdued accents to each other now, and went about their work in a quiet way far different from their usual manner of doing things. Still, they could not afford to be idle, and as the night promised to be fine one a number of them got their crafts under way, and were standing out for the bay towards their fishing-ground. Laurence Harland and his sons were making preparations to follow their example, when Mark Langton made his appearance from Blackrock Tower.

John and Harry met him as they were each carrying a load of nets down to the beach; but beyond remarking it was "likely to continue fine" they did not stop to enter into any conversation.

"Poor boy," said Mark, sympathizingly, as he looked back after the younger brother, "it is hard to tell by his face how he feels! So cheerful, so quiet and so good-humoured! Well, I shouldn't like to be the girl who's slighted him for a good deal. I hope she'll come to her senses by-and-by, and not cause him farther trouble. But what's the use of talking? Women will be women, do what you like." And with this sage remark old Mark Langton went in quest of Laurence Harland.

He soon found him, and delivered Doctor Philander's message to him in private.

The sturdy old fisherman evinced no surprise whatever at receiving a message from Blackrock Tower, much to the astonishment of the jewel-vendor, who was burning with curiosity to know what could induce Laurence Harland to obey the doctor's summons so readily. But he soon saw the fisherman was in no mood to be questioned, and determined in his own mind to draw him out upon the subject at a more favourable moment, he bid him a good day and started for the Manor.

Laurence Harland followed the jewel-vendor's retreating form with his eyes for a moment or two, then rejoined his sons, who were getting their craft under way.

"Everything is ready now, father," said John, preparing to leap into the boat, "and we had better shove off at once and not let the others get too much ahead of us."

"Ay, ay," said Laurence, turning his eyes seaward, though his thoughts were so reality with the owner of Blackrock. "It will be a fine night, lads—a very fine night, and I am glad of it, for you must manage without me to-night. I have business that detains me on shore. You had better put off at once and get to the fishing-grounds."

John and his brother, hearing their father thus express himself, lost no time, but got their craft in order and were soon following in the wake of the other boats.

The fisherman watched the boat until it turned a promontory of bold and rugged-looking rocks, then he entered his cottage, and, after making some changes in his dress, was soon on the road to Blackrock.

Laurence Harland, after three-quarters of an hour's sharp walking, drew up in front of Blackrock Tower. The postern was open and he entered the courtyard. The servant was at his old post seated on the stone bench as usual, but on recognizing the fisherman he got up, and, after a few commonplace observations, led the way into an apartment of the old building.

"Remain here, Mr. Harland," said he, handing him a chair, "until I inform my master of your arrival."

A full hour had passed since the man had left him, and Laurence Harland was beginning to fancy that the doctor had forgotten his appointment, when the door opened and the servant reappeared.

"My master is ready to see you now," said the man.

And he led the way, followed by old Laurence, into

the same apartment in which the interview between the doctor and Mark Langton took place at an earlier hour.

The window of the room was now closed, and Doctor Philander was seated with another gentleman, with whom he appeared to be in earnest conversation.

When Harland entered the room the doctor arose at once and locked the door, then, telling the former to take a chair, seated himself quietly between his two visitors.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Harland," said the doctor, in his most bland manner. "You have seen Captain Faulkner before, I understand, so I will not trouble you with the ceremony of a reintroduction."

"It is not necessary at all, doctor," said the gentleman addressed as Captain Faulkner. "Myself and Laurence Harland are known well to each other. It is not the first time he has piloted me over these waters," pointing out to the open sea which could be seen in placid repose through the window.

"No, nor I hope not the last either, captain," rejoined Harland, good-humouredly.

There little social amenities over, Doctor Philander said, seriously:

"I have not sent for you for nothing, Mr. Harland. Now the question is, are you prepared to do me a service?"

"Name it," replied the old fisherman, eagerly, "and if I don't say I—"

"Wait until you hear what it is first," the doctor interrupted, gravely. "But before I go farther you must promise that what I am about to tell you will remain locked in your own bosom until I give you liberty to divulge it. Come this way and you shall hear what I have to say. You will pardon me for a few minutes, Captain Faulkner?"

"Surely, doctor."

Philander beckoned the fisherman to the other end of the room, and spoke to him for several minutes in so low a tone that not a word could be heard by any save themselves.

"Time will show that your confidence has not been misplaced, Mr. Harland," the doctor said, grasping the sturdy old fisherman's hand, as, at the end of the conversation, they returned to Captain Faulkner's side.

(To be continued.)

GENERAL PONSONBY, Private Secretary to the Queen, has written to the authorities at the School of Military Engineering at Chatham, stating that Her Majesty desires to receive carte-de-visite photographs of the non-commissioned officers and men of the corps of Royal Engineers who recently received from Her Majesty medals for distinguished services in the field during the Ashantee war.

HERONS IN RICHMOND PARK.—Some herons which located near the water in Richmond Park last winter have remained, and although taking frequent leave of absence for some days they return, and there is every reason to suppose that they will this summer breed in the vicinity of the lake. Some few years ago herons bred and reared young in Wimbledon-park, the seat of Earl Spencer.

A WORD TO BOYS.—Boys, did you ever think that this world, with all its wealth and woe, with all its mines and mountains, oceans, seas, and rivers, with all its shipping, its steamboats, railroads, and magnetic telegraphs, with all its millions of grouping men, and all the science and progress of ages—will soon be given over to boys of the present age—boys like you? Believe it, and look abroad upon your inheritance, and get ready to enter upon its possession. The kings, statesmen, philosophers, teachers, ministers, men of the future—all are boys now.

LARGE orders have lately been given by the War Office for the manufacture of machine-sewn boots of the same army pattern as in present use both in shape and quality, the mode of machine-sewing being entirely optional with the manufacturers, in order that the most suitable system may be ascertained. These boots will be worn by the troops during the years 1875-6, and should they prove as serviceable as those made by the hand, will be generally adopted throughout the service, and a gain of over 20,000*l.* per annum effected on the army estimates.

THE WIND.—With what a spirit-like voice does the wind soar over and haunt this earth! Its earliest hymn is low, soft and holy, like the breathing of an infant in a dream! but its tones awaken soon to louder echoes, and all the spirits of the air rejoice around it, with the loud shoutings of an aerial hosannah. Thus it goes on, careering from one boundary to the other of the realms of space, rejoicing with a great and exceeding joy, in the wild and untiring swiftness of its flight. But it hath also a voice for the storms, wild, savage and lonely, screaming and shrieking, and shattering the wearied air with the terror and woe of its mighty blastings.



[A BAFLED MISCREANT.]

THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

CHAPTER L.

Farwell, love; my senses swim,
Earth is fleeting fast away,
Your fair face grows yet more dim,
This will be my parting day.

"PAPA, I must have air—freedom—solitude, this morning," said Gwenda, on the morning after the business at the opera, that, like many other coveted pleasures, was more brilliant in the contemplation than the reality. "I am tired, my head aches. It is so weary, is it not, to hear all those noisy voices in my very sleep?" she added, with a half-piteous smile, that went to the father's heart.

Raymond Lester was wonderfully changed since the first memorable day that had made him known to this child.

Still more perhaps was he altered since the earlier days when the one great blow fell on his erring head—when the crime and the temptation were at last discovered, and the once handsome and attractive barriester was hurled down, as it were, in the very abyss of degradation and misery.

No, the father of Gwenda, the proud spectator of the success of the Signora Bianca, the penitent sinner, the resolute and loving guardian of the beloved child whom he had in vain striven to shield from his own sorrow, was at once a sadder, a wiser and a nobler man than at any period of his past life. And while all his thoughts and actions were only devoted to one object—to her happiness and honour—he never placed himself as an obtrusive companion or an obstacle to her slightest wish or fancy.

"It is the penalty of your good gifts, my child," he said, quietly. "You will ere long receive more quietly the homage and applause that are your due. But whither would you go—what do you wish to do, my precious one?" he added, tenderly gazing at her wan face and glittering, fevered eyes.

"See, papa, the bay is so calm and beautiful. I should like to take a boat and land near the foot of the mountain, where, they say, marks of the late eruption will still be visible. And I will wander about a little by myself, and come back again, before dinner, in time for our evening walk."

Raymond smiled sadly.

"That matters not, my child, so long as you are content, and can be refreshed for your great toils," he replied. "But be careful, dearest, for I heard yesterday rumours of some English travellers who have

not returned to Naples so early as they had arranged, and fears were entertained of their safety in the ruins."

"Oh, I shall not be so rash," she replied, smiling. "So long as I have you, dear father, to love and care for, I will not risk my life. Were it otherwise, I am not sure that I should take such heed of my useless, dreary existence," she added, as if the words burst from her lips almost against her will.

Mr. Lester's heart sickened as he looked on the beautiful and gifted girl, whose hopes he had blighted in their very bud.

"Gwenda," he said, sadly, "tell me; do you still love him, Bernard, Lord Brunton? Is that the source of this deep misery and weariness of life?"

"No!" she replied, proudly. "I do not love him as he is. No, I despise Bernard, the cold and worldly marquis, who had not courage to defy the world for true love—for the sake of the vows he had well nigh spoken irrevocably. But, father, there is such a void—such a miserable sense of treachery in this world, that, but for you, it would be hateful to me."

"And yet," he replied, "I am the real cause of all your suffering, dearest child. But, Gwenda, there is one true and noble heart that has stood firm amidst the storm, and defied all, everything for your sake. Ah, if you could but have appreciated him better—if you could but have returned his great devotion—all might have been well; but, alas! it was not to be."

The girl gave a quick, impatient gesture.

"Father, if you speak of Gilbert Dorrington, you forget that he has not yet been tested. He has no position to lose; he cares not for the world, because he is unknown and struggling, and my wealth would have aided him more than my story would have disgraced his name. No, no," she added, passionately, "I will never trust human being more, till I find the noble and the courted shall venture to take Gwenda Lester to their home and hearts fearlessly and openly. Till then you shall be all—all to me," she added, throwing herself on her father's neck in an unrestrained passion of tears.

"And if he—if Gilbert were to prove himself thus true—what then?" asked Raymond, tenderly soothing his overwrought child.

"If the crown of Italy were laid at my feet, you might as well say, poor papa," the girl replied, smiling through her tears with a gleam of girlish buoyancy of spirit. "But I am very weak and wicked to torment you thus," she added, "only I think last night was rather too much for me, that is all. I shall be bright and happy again when I have refreshed my brain with the ramble among the mountain ruins. I may go, may I not?" she added, her proud spirit

bending, as it were, with childlike humility before her parent.

"What could you wish that I would hinder?" he said. "Gwenda, I should almost lose my reason when I think of all that I have brought on you did I not believe you will be rewarded for your devotion, though I may not live to see the blessing. But I am only saddening you once more," he went on, more firmly. "All this is best crushed down in our own hearts, except on such rare occasions at this. It does but weaken our powers; it has no good fruit, my Gwenda."

And the firm, calm tone and the gentle caress of the experienced man of the world had its effect on the impulsive nature of the girl.

She clasped her father for a brief moment in her arms, and then the passion seemed to pass.

"You are right," she said, "quite right. It shall be so. I will not grieve you again."

And with the calm dignity of a princess she withdrew from his arms, and with a gentle kiss left the room.

It was some hour or so after when the young cantatrice of San Carlos took her way from her pretty villa residence, and stepped into the boat, which she had more than once used for her special recreation since her stay at the Villa Marina.

It was a singular fancy perhaps, but no less real in its girlish interest, for the young Gwenda to try her woman's hand at the oar, and propel the fairylike boat, that fairly glided over the blue waters of the lovely bay, like a phantom ship over an unreal water, in its swift, noiseless course.

But in this instance, either from weariness or from deep and engrossing thought, the girl did not attempt to assist the boatman in his course.

She sat in the cushioned, canopied chair that graced the little skiff, with fixed eyes and a mind more occupied by sad memories than the charm of the scene around during the brief voyage.

And then when she had reached the part of the bay overlooking the blue mountains, she landed by herself, with a brief direction to the boatman to remain there till she returned, while she herself sprang eagerly forward, plunging, as it were, into the most dreary recesses and places where instant death might have been the result of one misadventure or imprudence.

But she heeded little of the danger that beset her. Her mind was far differently fixed, and when at last the path grew more difficult and toilsome to her feet, the circumstance was rather a benefit than a misfortune to her young spirit.

She picked up her courage and energy for the emer-

gency when once forced to the combat with nature's forces.

And again she bounded over lava heaps and avoided sinking, floating showers of sand, till her mind was insensibly diverted from the outer world, and more preceptibly braced by baffling the difficulties that beset her progress.

At length the way became almost impassable from the accumulation of dust and lava and stones, and the young girl stood for a brief moment considering what should be her next step.

A few moments more and a low, but unmistakable moan came on the quiet air.

Gwenda started at the sound in the stillness. There was no mistaking its existence.

Again and again it painfully broke the silence, and by degrees the girl could make out from what quarter it came, and her next impulse was to rush off in that direction, and decide the cause of such thrilling plaints.

She hurried forward, with now and then a pause to test the accuracy of the course she was taking, till at length there could be no doubt as to her near approach to the sufferer. The groans were louder and plainer in their intensity, till at length there could be no mistake as to their whereabouts.

A few moments more and the whole mystery was solved.

Gwenda perceived a sort of mound among the ashes of the lava that appeared to move with a strange life power, and in hastily advancing towards it she could distinguish clearly that the wailing sounds proceeded from some object beneath the ashes.

She was resolute and strong in will if not in frame, and springing rapidly to the spot she hastily commenced the task of freeing the sufferer from the burden above him. Her small hands frantically grasped the still warm lava till the coating of the form beneath was, as it were, removed and the features of the sufferer revealed to view.

She could easily guess the cause of the utter helplessness of the victim. A large stone lay behind him, that certainly had struck and stunned the brain, and a thin stream of blood had flowed from a wound which, unhappily, was too deep for a mere gushing and relieving flow.

Gwenda's heart beat high and full as she freed the poor, pale face from the disguising covering. She could surely have had no premonition of the truth, and yet, when at length Bernard's face was exposed to her view it seemed but a realization of what she had expected and dreaded.

"Bernard, dear, dear Bernard, what is this? Do you not know me, Gwenda? Speak to me, look at me, only give me one sign that you have not forgotten her you once loved," she exclaimed, kneeling down beside him and moistening his poor white face with her tears.

He was almost senseless, save the pain he was enduring. But her voice, her touch, the dew of her refreshing tears seemed to bring him to sense. He opened his eyes and met her loving face that showed such a world of hungry love and pity.

"Gwenda—forgive—I am—dying!" came in a hoarse whisper on her ears.

"No, no, you must not die," she said, eagerly. "Life has so much for you. Oh, Bernard, live for the sake of your mother—of Maud. I will fetch help," she exclaimed, eagerly. "You shall be saved." "No, no—do not leave me," he murmured, faintly. "I am dying—do not go. I had rather it were thus. Forgive—forgive!" he exclaimed, plaintively.

It was a thrilling scene, the all-but-wedded pair in that wild solitude with only death to share the vigil. Gwenda's whole frame thrilled as she listened and gazed on the corpse-like face that even to her inexperienced told of a mortal injury and approaching end.

"Dearest Bernard," she whispered, her whole restraint vanishing and her old tenderness once again gushing in her heart, "you know too well the love I bore you, my first, deep, true love. Poor Bernard, the trial was too severe for you," she murmured. "But Heaven forgive you, and receive your spirit to itself. Bernard, strive to lift your heart to Heaven—strive to pray," she said, her young heart penetrated with the solemnity of the moment too deeply for vain lamentations and tears. And he did seem to comprehend her words and the fervent prayers she offered up in his behalf.

Gwenda fancied that the eyes were raised to Heaven, and a smile came over the lips as the last gasp was drawn, the death-rattle sounded, and Bernard, Marquis of Brunton, was gone to his account.

CHAPTER LI.

He pressed her cheek as rose red,
He took her hand as white and smudged,
"Mine ain't lead lass, now we are wed,
And love shall still be lord of it."

"My poor darling, my Maud, my injured love," were the soothing words that fell on the ear of the

bereaved sister of the deceased Lord Brunton, as the girl almost tottered into the room, where her lover, utterly regardless of personal danger, awaited her.

The tidings of Bernard's death had been sent to the Hove with all due caution through the clergyman of the place, who, in his turn, had communicated with Gilbert Dorrington, now the heir to the estates and head of his race.

But though the young marquis had made every possible arrangement for doing due honour to the dead and consulting the feelings of the living, he yet had carefully abstained from appearing on the scene, lest he should wound the nearest relatives to the unfortunate deceased. So, while trusty servants had accompanied the marchioness and Lady Maud to the spot where the accident had taken place, and he himself had superintended every detail for bringing home the corpse, to be laid with its fathers in the old and honoured vaults, he had kept in the background, unnoticed and unthought of, till he was absolutely required to take his place in the ceremonial of interment.

But Sholto's heart had warmed and softened to the desolate girl he had so carelessly neglected in former days, and whatever might be the consequences to himself he resolved to stand by her side and support her in her grief, whatever should betide from the malice of poor Laura's husband and Raymond Lester's too.

Maud's heart was too crushed by this second bereavement to resist the dangerous consolation of him she loved.

"Oh, Sholto, this is wrong; it puts you in peril. I am sadly selfish to allow it," she faltered, as her head sank on his shoulder, and her arms entwined his with a clinging appeal to his love and sympathy.

"What matters it, dearest? I have learnt to know your value, to feel that life without you is too dreary to be borne," he returned, fondly. "Ah, Maud, you have borne with me and shown the real rather of a wife than of one betrothed by duty and not inclination. And if you could have loved me, if I had striven to win your heart, instead of chiding you by my wicked repugnance, then Maud, my life and yours would indeed have been far different. But I will hope and pray that you may yet meet with one worthy of you, one who will make your future blest, and then I can bear my own fate in life or death."

"No, no!" gasped the girl, eagerly. "Sholto, do you not know, can you not guess that from the very first I have loved you? It was only my pride, or perhaps the fear of seeming bold and unmaidenly that held me back, and made me pretend it was against my will and only to obey my father that I consented to marry you. Oh, Sholto, did you guess it? I was only so afraid you would see it all, and despise me," she added, leaning her head down till her face was buried in his bosom.

She could feel the heaving of his heart as she rested there.

She knew that it must be no ordinary agitation that could affect him thus, and his next words proved the truth of her belief.

"Maud, you cover me with shame, even though the love you confess is so dear and precious to me. What a villain I have been! With an angel to watch over me I have repaid her with the basest ingratitude that man could show, till now it is too late to repent, too late to atone for my insolent disregard of what was my dearest, noblest possession."

"No, dear Sholto, do not say so," said Lady Maud, raising herself from his arms and looking at him with a whole world of tender love and pride in her fair features. "It was no fault of yours if you did not at once care for the novice school-girl who was forced on you for a wife. And now, alas! when both are gone for whose sake the sacrifice was to be made, we may at least renew our vows, and forget all but that we at least have joined hearts if not hands," she murmured again, giving way under the new gush of emotion that the memories stored in her heart conjured up. "And Gwenda," she asked, after a moment's pause, "she who was so constant and forgiving in life and watched poor Bernard in death, where is she, Sholto? Surely she will not shun me now?"

Lord Saville hesitated.

"You must give her time, dear Maud. She is sadly shaken, and for some reason that I cannot quite comprehend she will not be in any way brought forward where you and yours are concerned. But her father has promised to bring her from Naples hither, when her engagement at San Carlos is finished, and then it will be more easy to draw her from her proud reserve. And if he dare be seen in England, I should entreat him to return there at once, and let her find a home among those who love her well. Shall it not be so, dear Maud?"

And the girl in some measure was drawn from her own deep grief in recalling the yet more grievous position of the felon's daughter.

"Sholto, I will go to her," she said, quickly. "She was my poor Bernard's early and only love, and if he had not courage to dare the consequences of his choice it was not her fault. And she must ever be as a sister to me whether in sorrow or in happiness," continued Lady Maud, with energy. "Unless she rejects me with scorn I can never forget she was my brother's plighted wife—ay, almost his legal widow."

"Yours is a noble nature, my Maud," said Lord Saville. "There is no jealousy in your generous spirit. Would that poor Laura could have known you! She would have appreciated you as you deserve, and her last days soothed by knowing how worthy you are of my love and care. But," he added, "what will the marchioness say? Is she alone in your absence?"

Lady Maud sighed deeply.

"Poor mamma seems to have sunk into no strange an apathy that it is of little consequence who is near her, except Reynolds, her maid, who has been with her for so many years. No, it is of little comfort to her for me to be near her."

"Then I will certainly not prevent what will be such happiness to poor Gwenda," returned Lord Saville, gently. "And if your discrimination is really fixed you can carry it out with very little expense of time or trouble. I will make every arrangement for you, and perhaps meet you there, though I have, alas! as yet no right to escort you myself through the journey," he added. "Ah, Maud, what a bitter penance I have brought on myself by my own folly and madness! Had I remained at your side and acted as I was bound by honour and duty I should have been spared the danger and the disgrace that now rest on my name. And you, angel that you are, can endure all without even a reproach. May Heaven bless you, Maud," he added, fervently.

And the girl felt her past sufferings and struggles repaid by these few fervent and sincere words.

Gwenda's fame was fairly established now in the musical Italian world, and such performance was but a fresh occasion for an ovation to the Signora Bianca, about whom the romance of mystery added to the charm of her beauty and grace. But though there were numbers of admirers whom a word or look would have brought to the fair debutante's feet Gwenda vouchsafed not one look or word to any of them that could give a ray of hope to their pretensions.

Each night the same modest carriage brought her to the theatre, the same careful chaperone attended her, during the transit and the performance, too closely for any bold admirer to find one opportunity to whisper a word of love or marriage in her ears.

The bouquets sometimes contained more valuable offerings than flowers, but they were put aside with a languid indifference that gave little encouragement for other aspirants. And this very reticence did but seem to add to the spell that the prima donna cast over the enthusiastic audiences of Naples, while her own heart was sad and heavy with many a memory and fear for the future.

Yet perhaps she was happier since that memorable day that had told her of Bernard's penitence and love. She could venture to think of him now without the bitter mortification of believing that she had loved unworthily, and that she was in her turn despised and hated for her involuntary deception.

"Yes," she said, one of those soft, calm mornings that would tempt her and Mr. Lester into the verandah of their villa dwelling, "I ought not to murmur now, dear father; I had his real love and I have yours. Do not fear for your Gwenda, she will live in the past when she is left alone in this world. And then it may be that Maud has not quite forgotten me, her early friend, though now that he is gone she may wish to bury all such sorrow in oblivion and ignore my very existence, though I shall always cherish her memory, dear, sweet, generous Maud," she went on, in the half-monologue tone she had often fallen into of late, and which Raymond Lester listened to with mingled sadness and interested sympathy.

"Maud is here to tell and to hear of such dear and precious affection," said a soft voice behind them.

And ere Gwenda had time to do more than spring from her seat, and turn to meet the unexpected intruder, Lady Maud was in her friend's arms, and the tears of the two girls mingled with a precious and soothing sorrow, in which there was no bitterness, whatever might be their sadness.

It was a touching tableau that was formed by the fair young girls, in their deep mourning garb, their chastened and subdued beauty made only more refined and elevated by the grief that had faded its bloom.

Raymond Lester drew back, that he might not be an intruder on the sacred confidence of the sister and plighted wife of the dead.

And when Maud raised her head from her friend's shoulder she saw that they were alone in that shaded verandah, that in a measure recalled one in which they had many a time sat together in the Hove.

"Gwenda, my sister," she said, softly, "you will not fly from Maud again; you will let her fulfil the part of a sister to you, even though he who would have united us in such a bond is gone for ever."

Gwenda smiled brightly through her tears. "I will always love you dearly, my darling Maud," she said, eagerly, "always cling to you as my dearest, almost my only friend; but we must live apart, as our paths in life are so widely separated. Still, it will be my best happiness to think of you, dearest, and to know you do not blame or scorn poor Gwenda," she added, with a kind of child's self pity. "You will have all, and she has but one to care for, and work for."

Lady Maud shook her head reprovingly. "No, no, that is not right, not fair to me and my true affection, Gwenda. You were, as I at least know, his wife in the sight of Heaven. And it is but your absolute due that you should be considered by his family in the position of his widow, Gwenda."

"No, no, no!" ejaculated the girl, proudly. "Not so, dear Maud. You know that the marriage was deferred under a cruel mistake, and the terrible event which stopped it appeared to be almost a special Providence to arrest it. Maud, all that should be forgotten—ignored between us, but, for the rest, it is different. We were early friends; let us be so still. You, as Lord Saville's wife, and I as the opera singer are all different in position and in duties."

"Only," said the voice of one too familiar to Gwenda—albeit strange and unknown to Lady Maud, "there may perhaps never be that exact position—at any rate for the betrothed of the murderer noble whom she still clings to as her lover."

Lady Maud shrank back behind her friend as the dark figure of the Italian count came into view. "Who is he? What does he mean?" she asked, shrilly, of her friend.

"Oh, your betrothed suitor could soon give you some information on that head," returned the Count Albert, scornfully. "Only, I am not sure that he will have the opportunity for all these explanations. I expect the time for such loving intercourse will be very abrupt and short," he went on. "Lord Saville has broken his word to me, therefore I can but act on the fully-understood penalty, and at once commit him to the fate he escaped."

Lady Maud gave a faint scream. The whole occurrence was at once so unlooked-for and incomprehensible to her, the very person of the new comer so foreign to her knowledge, that her first impulse was to scorn and ignore his warning.

But another instant banished the temporary delusion.

Gwenda advanced with the dignity of a princess to the unwelcome stranger.

"Count Albert, you might be content with the misery you have already wrought," she said, proudly. "There is no need to add to the wide-spread ruin that has been your work. Blood is on your hands already," she went on, with a shuddering horror in her voice and tone.

Albert de Fontane could not quite repress the sudden start of astonishment and even alarm that paled his saturnine features with unwonted betrayal of emotion.

"It is scarcely worth argument," he said, coldly. "Of course love-sick young ladies are ready to doubt and abuse every one that goes contrary to their ideas of romance. But in this case I regret to be put in exact opposition to either of my fair auditors. I have no alternative, since the persons in whom they are most interested are guilty of exceedingly unfortunate and aggravated crimes, for which I am bound to exact some atonement, either in their punishment or my own advantage," he added, in a sarcastic tone. "It is no fault of mine if the father of one of you fair maidens chose to commit forgery in making haste to be rich, nor that the suitor of the other chose to fall in love with my wife and then display his affection by murdering her when he was forced to bind himself to another and less welcome bride. Forgers and murderers seem to have a great attraction for the pupils of Madame MacLaine, but I for one mean to pursue them to the very death, unless I see sufficient cause."

"That cause shall be very quickly proved to you, Count Albert de Fontane," said a voice that had not yet mingled in the conversation. "I have been more fortunate than yourself, since I have traced out the whole tortuous windings of the foul plot you have laid. Providence has aided my own honest endeavours to bring the truth to light by a most unexpected discovery."

"Gilbert, cousin, save him!—save us all!" cried Lady Maud, springing to the side of Gilbert Dorrington, or, as he must now be called, the Marquis of Brunton, and clinging to his arm with the eager pleading trust of a child.

It was no wonder, when the poor girl had borne and suffered so bravely and alone all her grief and bereavement, that the sight and the very voice of the companion of her childhood and the sole relative now left to her broke down her self-reliance and brought her to his side in utter submission and helplessness.

"Calm yourself, dearest Maud," said the young marquis, tenderly, soothing the pale girl with a brother's affectionate support. "Thank Heaven, you will be spared any farther trial, Maud, your past sorrows have left. Your future husband is as innocent of the murder of the unfortunate Countess de Fontane as yourself. And your noble trust and love for him will be rewarded, and I hope deserved," he went on with a glance at the young earl who was in the apartment, whither Gilbert conducted his cousin from the verandah that had hitherto been the scene of the strange interview.

"And pray what wonderful revelation has given you this assurance, and to whose agency is the murder of my wife owing?" asked Count Albert, in a constrained sarcasm of tone.

"A very usual mode of bringing criminals to justice, Count de Fontane," returned Lord Brunton, calmly. "The confession of a penitent accomplice, strengthened by other and yet more undoubted testimony. But I will not be as torturing as yourself in keeping you and others in suspense. I will explain at once my meaning. There were some circumstances that excited my suspicions so strongly as to the crime with which my cousin's betrothed husband was charged that I determined to test their truth. I went to Naples, where I had an interview with Doctor Leonini, the eminent physician whom you induced to trust you with the poisonous little powder that kills only by slow degrees. Then I sought out the unhappy boy whom you had drawn into your toils, and other servants connected with your establishment there, and it all ended in a mass of undoubted proof that you, her husband, were the murderer of Laura de Fontane, while casting the guilt of the crime on an innocent if erring man. Peace, bad man!" he added, with dignity, as the count made a gesture as if to deny indignantly and scornfully the charge. "Peace! It is your only hope of mercy. It may be that for the sake of those whose names and happiness are bound up with your crime I will leave you to the punishment of your own torturing remorse and misery. But one word of denial, and one attempt to injure those whose peace you have injured and fame destroyed, and your own life shall not be worth one month's purchase. I hold ample proofs to bring you, without one chance of escape, to the gallows."

And Gilbert sternly waved the impotent but revengeful Italian to the door, while Maud clung to him as if her only hope of safety was in the cousin who had so nobly wrought out her own and Sholto's deliverance.

But Albert de Fontane was not so easily crushed and determined from his hate and revenge.

"It is a very remarkable way of judging an accused man to refuse him one chance of vindication," he said, bitterly. "And as you are so zealous for justice, Lord Brunton, I claim its execution on Raymond Lester, the escaped ticket-of-leave felon. So much, at least, you cannot in any manner of fairness or even safety refuse. I, as one who suffered in happiness and purse and fame through his crime, demand such compensation at your hands, unless you would be branded as an abettor of those who break their country's laws."

And he stood frowningly regarding his auditors as they were grouped together.

Maud and her cousin Gwenda, sheltering, as it were, her father, before whom she placed herself, and Lord Saville calmly awaiting, with unflinching, stern firmness, the development of the singular scene.

Gilbert gave a scornful smile as he replied:

"Again, bad man! Have you no shame? no sense of wrong or fear? Does not your own heart tell you that you have no hope, and that your only chance lies in submission, and casting yourself on our mercy? Look here," he added, displaying a document that he drew from his breast. "Here is Her Majesty's free pardon to Raymond Lester, in that he has not fulfilled the last year of his probation, and a confirmation of the property he acquired for his child. And for you, Albert de Fontane, the amount in which you were wronged shall be restored, in spite of the crime that has put it out of your power to claim any such rights at the hands of your victims!"

Gwenda gave one glad, deep cry, as she cast herself on her father's breast.

But glad, gushing tears streamed down the manly cheeks of the pardoned felon, as he felt once more that he was a free and unfettered agent in the world's army, and that his long labours for his beloved child were not in vain.

Like an application of burning flame to a noxious stain was the effect of that revelation to the guilty Albert de Fontane.

Surely and silently he glided away, in utter and baffled helplessness.

The very atmosphere appeared free and more healthful when he was gone, and Lady Maud drew a deep sigh of relief.

"Gilbert, dear, noble Gilbert, how can we thank you? What can we do to repay your services?" she said, eagerly, leaning on her cousin's shoulder with clinging earnestness.

He smiled somewhat sadly.

"Do not make me out to be an interested villain, Maudie, dear," he said. "It is enough for me that you are happy and safe; I want nothing more—at least from gratitude," he added, in an undertone, and with a look that was earnestly fixed on the ground, as if to avoid the meeting with Gwenda's glance.

Mr. Lester did not speak for a moment; but his eyes wistfully sought those of his young daughter as she stood at his side, as if questioning her feelings and wishes in this momentous crisis.

The girl pressed her hand painfully on her heart for a few seconds; her lips parted, once, twice, ere any sound came forth.

Then her whole frame seemed thrilled by some sudden impulse; and she first moved a step or two towards the spot where Maud and Gilbert were still half-resting against the long windows opening on the verandah, in silent anticipation of the dénouement that was rapidly approaching.

Her resolution seemed to waver for a few moments, but the nobler nature prevailed at length.

She sprang forward with a sharp, sudden bound to Gilbert's side.

"Dear, generous, noble friend," she murmured, gazing up in his face with touching friendship in her sweet features, "can you forgive me? may I try to atone for the pain I have given you, for the injustice, the blind folly of my perversity?"

Lord Brunton clasped her hand in his with unusual warmth.

"There is nothing to forgive, sweet Gwenda. Your heart was not in your own control; it was won by another. And if I can but feel I have done something for your happiness, that you will remember me as your own true friend, it will help me to find peace in my lonely greatness."

The girl's tears gushed out irrepressibly.

"Gilbert! I cannot bear you to be unhappy. I should be miserable too. Can you not pardon and understand me?" she added, a crimson blush flaming over her features.

Lord Brunton's eyes literally flashed with joy and surprise.

"Gwenda, be merciful; do not deceive me or yourself. I cannot bear you to be only grateful. If you do not love me as I love you I should be wicked to bind you to my fortunes. I judge you by myself," he said, with the candid earnestness that was one of his special virtues. "I know that neither rank nor wealth could make you happy without the true sympathy of soul."

Gwenda's colour went and came like a summer cloud as he spoke.

Then she placed her small hand in his and murmured, softly:

"Gilbert, I am not afraid, if you believe I can make you happy. And my whole life can only repay your generous devotion!"

It was enough.

The long, patient devotion of years was at last repaid.

Gilbert had won the treasure which he valued far beyond either coronet or wealth.

And Gwenda's exacting heart was satisfied, for the wealthy marquis had humbly sued for the felon's daughter.

Four months afterwards a double wedding was solemnized in the church at Bridgnorth which was nearest to the Hove and Fern Place.

It was perhaps quieter than would have been expected from the rank and fortune of the brides and their husbands.

But the saddening influences of their past lives and the bereavements they had suffered made them shrink from any great publicity and glare at so short an interval of time.

Mr. St. John gave away Gwenda, at her father's especial request, while Lady Maud was indebted for the same office to Gilbert himself, ere he took his own place in a different character at the altar.

Raymond Lester lived in a quiet seclusion in his daughter's residence at Fern Place, though more than

half his time was spent at the Hove, which was within so easy a distance from his home.

Count Albert de Fontane was found dead in his bed a month or so after Gwenda's wedding, and the tell-tale odour of the apartment revealed the nature of his death and by whose hand his life had been cut short.

Meriton, the page, enlisted in the Italian army, and won fame and distinction in its ranks, which atoned for his early errors.

And Mr. Bolton was himself established as the friend and family solicitor of Lord Brunton and Earl Saville, till his retirement from practice dissolved the bond.

But to his last days he recalled with vivid eagerness his first interview at Madame MacLaine's with the fair Gwenda Loraine, the felon's daughter.

THE END.

THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

Miss Arlingcourt's Will, "*The Ebony Casket,*"
"*The Secret of Schwarzenburg,*" etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"WAKEN, Amri! waken, my handsome boy," murmured Aimée's rich, melodious voice once again in her son's sleeping ear.

His languid senses rallied slowly.

"The day has dawned gloriously, even though it be in this chilly English climate, the day of our exaltation and triumph. Waken to your new life. This is your wedding-day, and the day when the mysterious treasure of the belt is to be given to the light."

At this he raised his head, and brightened into wakefulness.

"You here, mother? What is it for?" he asked in surprise.

"I was restless and perturbed. There was nothing for me but to walk off the excitement that is bubbling and seething in my very blood. Can you credit it? He has not found me, that terrible Adam. A few hours longer, and we are safe. Ah, it seems to me I must burst into cries of joy!"

"Hush! where is my servant?"

"I sent him away upon an errand. He was none too ready to let me in."

"I don't wonder—at this hour. Do you mean you have walked all this distance?"

"I could go twice as far, and not know I had taken a step. I woke up, and could not sleep again. Then a foolish notion came to me that our enemy was near, that he was watching at your door, and nothing would quiet me but to come and see. Ah, how earnestly I scanned the streets as I came along! How my eyes searched everywhere from under the thick veil that hid my face from others! Nay, I was not calmed till I had reached the very threshold, and my knock brought the man to tell me that you were well and peacefully asleep. Adam is not here. He is following the woman I hired to wear my clothes and take my trunks by any zigzag path she chose, if it only led away from here. Now I am relieved, and will return, and reach the house before any of them know I have left it. Be cautious, Amri, for these few hours longer, and come promptly. Every minute's delay is an hour of torture. Once married you are lord of her movements and fortune, and we will hurry off to Paris, and put our half of the jewels safely where no one, not even Adam or the real Algeron, can touch them, while hers will be also under your control."

"If you had not forbidden my seeking the fair young Daisy," spoke Amri, discontentedly.

"I told you there must be no risks run at present—that there would be time enough afterwards. Now I must return. Come promptly, and bring the belt. It was foolish for me to give it to your keeping last night; but his asking me where it was gave me a little start. I thought some one might try to rob me of it."

"I should like to see it myself before they touch it. Why may we not take the largest stones ourselves?" persisted Amri.

"Foolish lad! Don't you know that there is an accurate description of them in a dozen places—their size, their weight, their colour—and that Adam knows it all? I meant to have him safely out of my way in that prison, and if he molest me I will try to send him back to it. Then there is the captain, whom you should have seen securely under the water. These two stand in the way of our taking sole possession. Have I not reflected upon it long enough? The marriage is all that makes us secure. Do not delay it more than is absolutely necessary."

"I will come before the clergyman. There comes my man. Go back in a carriage, if you can find one out so early."

But Aimée did not look for any carriage. As she

had said, her wild blood was fevered with excitement and suspense, and quiet and stillness were absolute torture to her.

She came into the Manor House with dark cheeks flushed into carnation, and eyes glittering like stars, with light, springy step, just as Ethel, pale and languid—for her night had been sleepless, despite her uncle's whispered hope—was coming down the stairs. She bent low and touched her hot lips to the girl's cool hand.

"I salute my son's bride. Does my daughter give me joy also?"

"I must run to mamma—she is calling!" cried Ethel, rousing out of her languor, and flying away.

Madame Roscoe kissed her daughter tenderly, but began immediately to talk about the fine trousseau to be prepared in Paris the moment the golden fruits of the long-lost treasure was in their hands.

Ethel sighed softly, and slipped away from her also. She was thankful to leave the scarcely-tasted breakfast and Margery's red eyes that followed her so wistfully, and get safely back to her own room. But there was the fleecy lace dress and the bridal paraphernalia.

Ethel shivered as she glanced at them, and sat down at the window to look for Uncle Guy's coming, with her back to them. She turned the key of her door against intruders, and asked for an hour's solitude, when they came fluttering up, anxious to commence preparations.

"Not quite yet, dear mamma—not quite yet, please. I will call you when I need you, and I promise you to be ready in ample season."

But the moments slipped away with what seemed fearful rapidity to poor Ethel, while she sat motionless at the window, and still no one came—at least no one she was looking for with that eager wistfulness of alternating hope and fear.

The bridegroom arrived seasonably, and when she saw him Ethel knew there was no use of farther resistance, and opening her door with a passive yielding to dire necessity, she called:

"You may help me now, mamma."

She was speedily ready, as far as outward attire was concerned, for the tragedy or the farce—which it would be, the poor child was questioning over and over.

"Where can Aubrey be, and Guy? It is unwarrantable, this want of punctuality!" said Madame Roscoe, a dozen times, flitting from one window to another in her impatience.

Aimée had followed her quite as restlessly, but with no words.

"There is a coach!" she exclaimed, presently; "and it is coming this way. The curtains cover the window so I cannot see who is in it. It is probably the one ordered to take us to the station, and they have mistaken the hour."

"And there is Aubrey, and Guy, and a strange gentleman, the clergyman, of course, in a second carriage. Let us hasten to be in our places," cried the excitable mistress of the manor.

In obedience to which Aimée withdrew from the window before she had taken her view of the clergyman.

Colonel Blenkarne came in with Aubrey and the stranger, who was quietly shown into Aubrey's private room, where he turned the key, a little to Jones's surprise.

"We have a little business affair to settle first," was all the explanation his master gave him. "Now then, Aubrey, bring down your sister. I see that your mother is in the parlour with the bridegroom and his mother."

He walked in quietly, bowed to the occupants of the parlour, and stood at the door as if waiting for Ethel's appearance.

"The clergyman, Guy?" began Madame Roscoe, coming towards him, a little impatiently. "It is not polite to leave the reverend gentleman outside."

"He will excuse us; he understands that when we need him we shall call him. But first, you know, comes our little matter of business," answered her brother. "Ah, and here is our darling. You bring us an April-looking bride, Aubrey."

Ethel's sweet face seemed indeed to be a struggle between smiles and tears, while Aubrey was pale and almost stern in his gravity.

"And now, then, we are all here, madam," said the colonel, turning to Aimée.

"But all but the clergyman," she said, significantly. "You forget that his presence is a sort of protection for us."

The colonel shrugged his shoulders.

"You would make the ceremony appear like an exceedingly mercenary transaction," he said; "but if we are to have one witness let us have more. I took the liberty to invite a select few to this wedding. Then they may as well be called in also."

He stepped out into the hall and rapped twice upon the wainscot.

In a moment there was a little group of people outside.

"Lady Blenkarne!" pronounced Colonel Guy, in the coolest possible tone.

And a stately lady, with hands bandaged instead of the usual adornment of jewels, glided in and took a seat, notwithstanding Madame Roscoe rose to her feet, with flashing eyes and scornful looks.

"Mr. Osborne and Miss Wymer!" continued the colonel.

That handsome pair likewise helped themselves to seats in silence.

"Have we enough witnesses, madam?" asked the colonel.

"I am satisfied," was the cold reply.

And now, then, perhaps they will need an explanation. You declare, sir," he went on, turning suddenly upon Amri, who was looking nervous and a little anxious, "that you are the son of General Ralph Vansittant, and his legal heir, and that you hold at the present time the belt which contains the long-lost Blenkarne emeralds, which you surrender to be divided according to the legal claim and the bequest in the late Sir Ralph's will?"

Amri gave one quick, questioning glance into his mother's face; but before he could speak she answered for him:

"What an absurd question at this late hour. If we have not already proved this, why are we here? Of course he is General Vansittant's son, and the belt is here."

She drew it forth with an air of triumph and held it up to their view.

Daisy bent forward eagerly and looked at the belt with earnest, scrutinizing eyes.

Amri came around beside her, and whispered: "Half of it is mine. Do not forget it, fair English lily," and went back to his mother's side, with eyes as eager in their curiosity as any one's.

Aimée drew forth a penknife and cut deftly and rapidly into the leather, while she said, half-anxiously:

"So the first question is settled? The bridegroom is the son of General Ralph Vansittant? You admit that?"

The colonel bit his lips a moment, and then replied: "Perhaps I do not quite concede this, madam, but wait for the proofs to substantiate your statement."

The penknife paused in its work.

"What do you mean?" she demanded, fiercely, while Amri, half-unconsciously, retreated towards an open window.

Colonel Blenkarne stepped again to the door, and returned with a broad-shouldered young athlete, who held in his hand the fac-simile of Aimée's belt.

"The truth is, friends," declared the colonel, "that I have two young gentlemen each claiming to be Captain Algeron Vansittant, and equally curious is the fact that there are two belts."

"He is an impostor!" cried Aimée, her eyes flashing like those of an infuriated tigress.

"Nay, but he insists that he is not, and I am quite sure that the belt is not, for we opened it this morning and found it to contain not only the priceless long-lost gems, but papers which prove his claim to share in their possession," was the calm rejoinder.

A wild terror came over Aimée. If his belt held the emeralds what could be in hers?

She forgot all the rest in that one wild fear, and it was the hand of a baffled fury that slashed the spurious belt into an hundred miserable fragments and found—nothing!

Amri stood paralyzed, the picture of imbecile despair and craven terror.

His mother, deadly pale but fierce and fearless still, dashed forward towards Algeron, and snatched at the belt, crying out:

"He is an impostor! he is a vile impostor, who has stolen away our belt. I defy him to prove his claim. Where are his letters from the general?" she shrieked.

"Your son stole them from me, together with my letters of credit," answered Algeron, calmly. "But does that prove that he is Algeron Vansittant, Aimée? And if you declare he is your son, how does it happen that he can be a legal heir when, as every one in Calcutta knows, there was never a wife in the general's house? Foolish woman! your ambition has overreached itself."

"I declare that he is an impostor, that this is the true son of General Vansittant!" reiterated Aimée, laying one hand on Amri's shoulder, while she turned to Colonel Blenkarne and then to Madame Roscoe, appealingly.

The latter looked over to her helplessly, and stammered:

"I don't know what to think. I am astonished and frightened at all this. Why, madam, think how much you have told me about that belt, and there was nothing, actually nothing in it."

Aimée gnashed her teeth again, savagely, as she declared: "We have been cheated. We had the true belt once."

"Meantime we have two Algeron Vansittants," said Colonel Blenkarne, "and no one here seems fully competent to decide between them, although we must all confess that in this broad-shouldered young fellow we see the nearer likeness to the old stalwart race of Blenkarne. I think we need another witness. Fortunately I have found such. We will have him in, and he shall decide between the two claimants. A gentleman who was intimately acquainted with General Vansittant and his son."

"Thank Heaven," ejaculated Algeron, fervently; "now there will be full confirmation of my statements. Who can it be? Sir Richard, I hope."

"I will bring him in promptly," returned the colonel, answering with a beaming smile the hopeful glance of the true Algeron, while he did not fail to notice the livid hue that overspread the other's face.

Amri had again fallen back towards the open window. His mother gave him one swift glance and took up her position in the same line, glancing fiercely toward the door through which the promised witness was to appear.

Unlike Algeron she had no questioning concerning him. Well enough Aimée knew whose hated face was shortly to appear.

Algeron leaped forward with a joyful cry: "Adam! dear old Adam, here in England, and safe!"

(To be continued.)

COURTSHIP.

IN Scotland it is difficult for a man to draw the line between courtship and a connubial condition. That which in the Englishman is but a flirtation would become in the Scotchman rank matrimony. Most people in Scotland are married; but they are not aware of the fact, as Monsieur Jourdain did not know that he had been talking prose all his life; the distinction is drawn when they do become aware, and then the marriage is avowed.

In England there are different ways of doing the same thing. When Lady Clara Vere de Vere has a prétendu in her own rank of life the arrangements between the pair are conducted with reference to a certain degree of etiquette. She is not restrained to the extent that she would be in France; and it is hard if in the course of walks, drives and dances, croquet, cantering, exhibition-seeing, picnicking, and all the various incidents of town and country life, the pair do not manage to meet some seven days in the week, and to give chaperones now and then the go-by.

In the lower grades of society it may be supposed that courtship is equally delightful; but appearances are decidedly against it. When Miss Jemima Higgs has "her young man," and he is on such terms with her family as not to be turned out of doors, he may go to the house and take her out whenever he pleases, and no one dreams of interfering. Jemima is probably a presentable style of girl—girls of her class are far more so than they were, and especially dress better than they did, albeit in rather an exaggerated style—but her betrothed is decidedly rough. See him when he comes to take her out to walk in Battersea or Victoria Park. He is far from being on a par with her, either in manners or attire. He is tolerably sure, too, to have a pipe or a cigar in his mouth. His talk is sad slang, and not over-refined. The girl goes off gaily with him, but one cannot help wondering at her taste; and the question inevitably occurs, of what do they talk when they are alone? She has picked up a certain vocabulary of sentiment; but his range of subjects must be a very narrow one—very different from the world of beautiful fancies open to Lady Clara Vere de Vere and the "young lord lover" who pays his homage at her shrine.

It is not to be supposed that humble station and want of culture prevent people from loving as deeply as our aristocratic friends. The late Robert Brough, in a poetical version of a tale from Boccaccio, writes very prettily of a pair of lovers who sat together saying nothing, but simply "engaged in loving." Jemima and "her young man" doubtless bring all their tender instincts towards the "occupation" in question; but it is sad to think that she will perhaps express her regret at having had to sit "opposite to him in the bus on their way home," and that when his words take an affectionate form they will connect her with the description of "old gal."

However, we are here writing of miserable cockneys. Village courtships must be very different affairs, or poets would not have glorified them as they have done, from the earliest period to the present time. Rustic lovers are not always Damons and

Phyllises; but they are not likely to be without a certain rural simplicity, and are free from the slang of the town. The saddest kind of courtships must be those of couples who do not care about one another. It is easy enough to make people believe that you love them less than you do, but very difficult to make them believe that you love them more.

SCIENCE.

PRESERVATION OF MEAT.—This subject has been brought before the Paris Academy of Medicine in the form of a report to the committee of hygiene of the Department of the Seine. A chamber has been constructed, in which a low degree of temperature is obtained by the evaporation of methylic ether, the apparatus evaporators and condensers the ether, and causes the circulation of chloride of calcium, and by means of tubes cold is distributed in all parts of the building. The walls are double and isolating, the air within is constantly agitated by a ventilator, and is maintained at a temperature between 0 degree and 1 degree centigrade. At the end of six, eight, or ten weeks, the viands were withdrawn from the refrigeratory chamber; their appearance had in no way changed, but their weight had diminished, especially in the case of the poultry and the game, to the extent of about 12 per cent.; the odour of the meat had in no way altered.

A NEW TORPEDO.—The German Admiralty has decided to adopt a new kind of torpedo, which can be moved about while under water from the shore. The weapon consists of a long hollow cylinder, containing, besides the fulminating powder, a sufficient quantity of air to enable it to float. It is moved by means of electric currents passed through wires which connect it with the land, and by an air-propelling apparatus also fixed on the shore. The speed of this torpedo can be raised so as to exceed that of the swiftest ships. A detonating apparatus is attached to it in front which explodes on contact with any solid body. A number of torpedo boats are also to be built for the purpose of pursuing hostile ships and attacking them unobserved. These boats will be propelled by a screw moved by hydraulic power, and will be steered under water by means of a compass. They are to be capable of performing a four days' journey at sea.

SUN SPOTS.—The following record is from April 18th to May 15th. The number of observations is larger than usual. Generally speaking, the spots have been of good size, rather more numerous than usual this year, and have shown little change from day to day. A very interesting group was first seen on May 7th. When it was half-way to the centre, its daily motion was about equal to its width; at the centre its motion was about once and a fourth its width. Comparing from day to day, there were very gradual changes, so that its recognition was unmistakable. These small successive changes reached, however, such an amount that, after crossing the disc and reaching the western limb, there could be no likeness traced between its appearance then and its appearance on the 7th. It was seen during eleven days. The ingress and egress were not observed; but estimating by the rate of the passage when near the limb, it occupied 12 or 13 days for the entire passage from limb to limb, its course being nearly a diameter of the disc. Its rate was more rapid over the latter half of its course, showing that it must have had a motion besides that due to the sun's revolution on its axis. When in the centre, twenty-five constituent spots were counted on the photographed disc (which has a diameter of 3½ inches). It had then widened to three times its breadth when at the edge.

ELECTROPLATING WITH COBALT.—Dissolve the pure metal cobalt in boiling muriatic acid, and evaporate this solution to dryness. Then dissolve from four to six ounces of the salt thus obtained in a gallon of distilled water, to which add ammonia sufficient to show on test paper the solution just slightly alkaline. Then prepare an anode of the metal cobalt, in granular form or broken into small pieces, free from impurities, as follows: Take a plate of carbon, or of some other material that is a conductor of electricity, but not susceptible of being attacked by the plating solution, and place it within a sack or envelope made of some material that is neither a conductor of electricity, nor attackable by the solution, formed with open meshes or interstices through which the solution may freely circulate. This envelope should be made to conform in shape to the carbon plate, and large enough to leave a space between it and the plate of, say, one half an inch to one inch; then fill this space with the granules of cobalt, which will, as is evident, surround the plate and be in contact with it. By an anode thus constructed, a large surface of the cobalt is readily and conveniently exposed to the action of the solvent, and the steady flow of the entire battery current through

the cobalt is secured, thereby rendering the dissolution and deposition of the metal steady, uniform, and very perfect.

LAUGHTER AS A MEDICINE.—A short time since, two individuals were lying in one room, very sick, one with brain-fever, and the other with an aggravated attack of mumps. They were so low that watchers were needed every night, and it was thought doubtful if the one sick of fever could recover. A gentleman was engaged to watch overnight, his duty being to waken the nurse whenever it became necessary to administer medicine. In the course of the night, both watcher and nurse fell asleep. The man with the mumps lay watching the clock, and saw that it was time to give the fever-patient his potion. He was unable to speak aloud, or to move any portion of his body except his arms, but, seizing a pillow, he managed to strike the watcher in the face with it. Thus suddenly awakened, the watcher sprang from his seat, falling to the floor, and awakened both the nurse and the fever-patient. The incident struck the sick men as very ludicrous, and they laughed heartily at it for some 15 or 20 minutes. When the doctor came in the morning he found his patients vastly improved, and said he never knew so sudden a turn for the better. Now both are up and well. Who says laughter is not the best of medicines? says the contemporary we quote. And this reminds the writer of another case. A gentleman was suffering from an ulceration in the throat, which at length became so swollen that his life was despaired of. His household came to his bedside to bid him farewell. Each individual shook hands with the dying man, and then went away weeping. Last of all came a pet ape, and, shaking the man's hand, went away also with its hands over its eyes. It was so ludicrous a sight that the patient was enforced to laugh, and laughed so heartily that the ulcer [? abscess] broke, and his life was saved.

A CURE FOR LUMBAGO.—The last number of the *Journal des Connaissances Médicales* describes some cases of lumbago cured by Dr. Hamon, of La Rochelle, by means of local capillary bleeding. Some time ago a blacksmith of a neighbouring commune consulted him about an affection of this kind, which it seemed he had caught by exposure to cold while in a state of perspiration. He had come in a vehicle, which he could not step out of without assistance; he walked in doubled up with pain, the frictions with camphorated spirits of wine he had been making having produced no effect, though continued for three days. The patient being particularly anxious to get well, Dr. Hamon proposed the operation above alluded to with a mechanical cupping-glass. He having consented, he was made to lie down on his stomach, the lumbar region being brought out well into relief by means of a cushion laid under him. A wide-mouthed vessel being adapted to the aspiration tube, a vacuum was first made to draw the blood to the skin, which, soon becoming violet, acquired thereby a certain degree of insensibility. Air being let in again, the cupping-glass was taken off, and a 16-bladed scarificator was applied four times. The glass was now put on again and in about ten minutes 150 gms. of blood were extracted. The cure was instantaneous; the patient dressed himself, got into his vehicle without assistance, and has had no relapse since then. Dr. Hamon says that in rheumatic affections of the nature alluded to, this method, applied to persons of a good constitution, and loco dolenti, is the surest and most expeditious.

LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY; OR, THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was late in the afternoon before Madame Brentano came out of her chamber into the sitting-room adjoining.

As usual her toilet was scrupulously elegant and carefully arranged, but her face bore the unmistakable sign of trouble and sorrow.

Her attentive maid had drawn up a couch near the bright little fire and placed on it the luxurious cushions; had arranged a table on one side, and set upon it the tray containing the tempting dinner.

Madame Brentano sank down upon the cushions with an audible sigh, and turned languidly towards the table.

But no delicacies could tempt the unhappy lady to eat. She sipped part of a cup of coffee, then sent away the untasted repast, and took up the evening newspaper.

It was full of the usual variety of news, and in a conspicuous column was an article announcing the second appearance in the opera of the celebrated vocalist, Madame Brentano, with high praise of her previous performance and predictions of a brilliant career in the profession she had chosen.

She sighed from the depths of her aching heart. "What is all this worth to me?" she said, aloud. "Do I not envy even the servants who wait on me, because they have the ties of affection to bind them to life, the hope born of love to sustain them in trial or trouble?"

She fell into deeper musing.

"He feared that I would denounce him, that I would rid myself of a loathed bondage by giving him up to the laws he had outraged. How little he knows me! even the pride of my nature!"

The maid entered with a card on a salver.

"If you please, my lady"—she had taken a fancy to this form of address, by hearing it used among the French opera subordinates—"the lady called, the porter says, two hours ago, but he said you were not well; and could see no one. She is in the drawing-room."

Madame Brentano took the card, glanced at it, and dropped it in utter surprise.

"Miss Blunt," she repeated.

"Will you see her, my lady?"

"Yes; you may bring her in here. We shall be more secure from interruption."

In a few moments the visitor was introduced. She was tall and thin, with a faded complexion and the marks of care on her face. She had a nervous manner, and was continually clasping and unclasping her hands at times, till it became painful to the spectator.

Madame Brentano had risen, and came forward to meet her, with a smile and extended hand, while the stranger grasped tremulously in both her own.

"Pray be seated," said the hostess, making room on the sofa. "Are you cold? Take this seat, nearest the fire."

"I should hardly have known Florence," said Miss Blunt. She was the sister of Madame Cantrín, formerly principal of Vale School. "In the time that has passed since we parted you have wonderfully improved."

"Do you think so?"

"You are much fuller and more rounded in form, and your colour is so bright and clear. You enjoy excellent health, do you not?"

"I do, usually; but to-day I am indisposed and feverish."

"Girls of your make in early youth often develop into magnificent women. I always prophesied you would do so."

"Are you still at Vale School?" asked the former pupil.

"Alas, no; it was broken up more than a year since, after the death of my poor sister."

The speaker put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I had not heard of it," said Florence, in tones of kindly sympathy.

She touched a bell, and ordered some refreshment. The visitor protested against giving so much trouble, but partook heartily of the dainties, wine, etc., when brought in; talking the while of her own sad reverses of fortune, and her pleasure when she found her pupil had returned to the city, and that her success had been so great in the career she had decided to pursue.

"How did you know me for Florence, your pupil?" asked the singer. "You never knew me by the name of Brentano?"

"But I knew your finishing teacher in music, and he told me you had taken the Italian name to sing in concerts. I saw notices of your success in the papers from time to time; and, lastly, I saw with delight that you were going to appear in opera. I have been living here some months."

"You?"

"Yes; I am at present at the St. Louis Hotel. I could not bear to stay where I had lived so happily with my sister and our lovely children, the pupils. They were all like my own. You were especially dear to me, Florence."

"A wayward child, at best," was the smiling answer.

"I cannot tell you how heart-broken I was when you left us to marry—Blake, was not his name? Is he living yet, dear?"

"He is," replied Florence, turning away her face.

"But you, after his base desertion, you have not returned to him?"

"I have not; I do not intend to."

"I am glad of that; he was unworthy of you, such a pity that you should not be free from such a man! Why not try for a divorce?"

"I do not approve of divorces."

"But the law would set you free—free to form other ties; and why should you, beautiful and courted as you are, live so desolate a life?"

Florence winced and her colour rose.

"Do not speak so, Miss Blunt. There are some things I cannot bear."

"Oh, pardon me, I did not mean to wound you. I

came to talk of something quite different. You are not obliged to live alone, as I am. I heard only a few days since—that the relative that took charge of your education had returned from abroad."

"Whom do you mean? I know no relative."

"That was so odd of him; my sister always thought so. He placed you in our charge confidently when you were a very little girl; gave your name, and said he would prefer that you should know nothing of him for the present. His remittances were liberal, and you know, dear, we spared no expense in teaching you."

"I know you did not. And this gentleman—"

"As I said, the supplies he sent never failed to arrive at the time stipulated, though sent from abroad. We expected that when you were grown and ready to leave school, he would open direct communication with you, or would come and take you home. Excuse me for once again referring to a painful matter; but your flight and marriage—"

"I know; that disturbed everything. But when I came back to the school—"

The visitor was evidently embarrassed.

She twisted and untwisted her scarf, and wrung her hands.

"The fact was," she said, at length, "Sister Cantrín had not thought it worth while to acquaint your guardian with the fact that you had gone away—hoping and expecting your return continually."

"You thought he might blame you for a want of strict training," remarked Florence, with a quiet sarcasm in her tone.

"Oh, no; that could not be! Our establishment had always been famed for the propriety and order in which the inmates were kept."

"And so glaring an outbreak as mine was a thing to be concealed."

"Can you blame us, Florence?"

"Far from it."

"I am glad you do us that justice. Well, we did not send word to your guardian, trusting to time and our watchful care, when once we could recover you. You came to us again; and still we had no letters to show you. None came till after you had left us to go and commence your finishing in music."

"Had you any for me, then? You should have sent them to me, Miss Blunt."

"Only one letter had come, and that was addressed to my sister. It contained a request that we should prepare you to come abroad at the next summons, and join your guardian."

"Why was not that sent to me?"

"We did not know your address. Nor did the writer of this"—she produced the letter from her reticule, and laid it on the table—"give his own address. We had no opportunity, therefore, of letting him know whither you had gone. After we learned from your teacher that you had resolved to sing in public we entirely lost trace of the gentleman."

"I cannot tell you how sorry I am for this, Miss Blunt. It might have saved me much of what has been painful in my life. Had you been more open with me it might have saved me from the one imprudent step that has blighted every hope of happiness in this world. If I had not been brought up in such utter ignorance of my parentage—"

"But it was not our fault, Florence. We were as ignorant as yourself."

"It is a sad and cruel thing thus to take from a young orphan that to which she has a sacred right—the memory that may guide her feet in the path of rectitude. Tell me, Miss Blunt," she added, after conquering her agitation, "do you not believe me to be of respectable birth?"

"I'm sure of it. The care taken of your education proves that."

"I have an indistinct memory of my parents—my father as a tall, noble-looking man, mother tall too, with flashing black eyes, who often punished me, and did not love me as well as my sister. I remember her, too, a slender child, a little older than myself. She used to give me all her toys. They must be all dead long since."

She laid her head upon her folded arms on the table and wept softly.

The ex-instructress tried to soothe her grief, in a feeble sort of way, telling her no uncommon trial had overtaken her, beyond women in general, and reminding her how much was left to her in the possession of youth, beauty, and brilliant professional success.

Florence lifted her head.

"This neglected guardian of mine, do you know where he is?"

"Yes, dear; he returned from abroad a short time since. As soon as I heard of it I came to beg of you—"

"Who is he?" interrupted her pupil.

"You may have seen him already. It is Colonel Atherton."

Florence gazed on her in bewildered astonishment

"Colonel Atherton?" she echoed.

"That is his name. He is a gentleman of standing. The lawyer who told me he was here said he had been making diligent inquiries for us at the Vale School, and had commissioned him to find me out; no doubt with the design of claiming you, or at least communicating with you."

"Colonel Atherton! This is the more incredible, as I know him to be a man of high-toned character, and of feeling, too; not negligent of affairs entrusted to him, or regardless of his duty, as you have described my guardian."

"Oh, I did not say he was regardless of duty, my dear. He may have had reasons for his reserve."

"Hardly any that could justify him in treating me as I have been treated."

While the retired schoolmistress again wrung her hands in the extremity of nervousness Madame Brentano once more touched the bell.

"A carriage in fifteen minutes," she said to the servant, "and send Emma here to dress me as soon as possible to go out."

"Why, have you an engagement so early?" echoed Miss Blunt.

"I am going, and you too—for I ask it as a right—to Colonel Atherton's house."

"Bless me, Florence, you are as impetuous as ever! What should I do there?"

"You must stand by me, while I demand of the gentleman all I have a right to know! all that has been withheld from me; the knowledge of myself and my history and surroundings which may enable me to take my proper position and maintain it."

"I implore you, child, do not act rashly. Wait till to-morrow."

"Wait? I cannot wait. No, not an hour. How could I sleep in such an uncertainty? He may have left town already."

"But it is almost dusk—"

"No matter if it is! You must go with me."

"Certainly, if you wish it, my dear. May I beg that, at least in this interview, you will not mention the little account running on during the interval of your—ahem!—flight from our establishment and return?"

"Never fear, madam. I leave all that to your conscience. Now, Emma, dress me quickly."

Excusing a brief absence, she entered the chamber, and in a short time came out in a plain street costume, with a gray gauze veil on her bonnet. Her visitor was ready to accompany her by the time the carriage was announced.

It was already dusk when they arrived at Colonel Atherton's house, and the light from two globes in the great central chandelier gave a dreamy lustre in the spacious drawing-room, to which they were shown. The ladies seated themselves, Miss Blunt having given her card to the servant, who carried it to his master.

Colonel Atherton was usually in his study or library at this hour. He took the card from the salver, but did not look at it till the man had lighted the lamp. At the first glance he rose quickly.

"Where is she?" he asked.

"The ladies are in the drawing-room, sir," replied the man.

"I will be there directly—tell them so."

The servant left the room, and the colonel took some minutes to recover from his surprise. Such agitating remembrances were associated with the names of Miss Blunt and Madame Cantrín. He dared not hope for favourable news. He went up to the drawing-room in the expectation of seeing both principals of the school, forgetting what he had heard concerning one of them.

He bowed courteously to both the ladies, not recognizing Madame Brentano in the faint light, for she sat farthest off, and wore her veil down.

He remembered Miss Blunt, as she advanced, and greeted her with cordiality.

He took a seat near, as she resumed hers, and told her how disappointed he had been at the failure of all his efforts to discover her and her sister.

The ex-preceptress lamented it too, more than she could express.

Her sister and she had made unwearied endeavours to ascertain the whereabouts of the guardian who had confided the interesting little girl to their care. Both of them had always loved her as their own. He might be assured—

"Pardon me," interrupted the gentleman; you can surely imagine what I most desire to know. Where is my child?"

"Oh, sir," faltered the lady, "I should long since have brought her to you, had I known where you were. I came as soon as I learned it."

"Is she with you?"

"I have brought her to you."

Her glance indicated the veiled form that sat a little way back. Florence rose, but did not take a

step forward to meet her guardian as he came towards her.

"This—this lady!" he exclaimed. And, taking her hand, he led her under the light, while she quietly removed her veil.

He recoiled in astonishment.

"This is Madame Brantano!"

He glanced at Miss Blunt in embarrassment. The schoolmistress was distressed. She feared some blame would rest on herself.

"It was her own choice," she faltered, "after she had finished her educational course, to adopt the musical profession. Indeed, her genius for music was always too marked to be repressed."

"But—her name—"

"She assumed the Italian name; it is usual among artists who embrace the profession of an artist, sir."

A visible tremor ran through the strong man's frame as he gazed on the beautiful, calm face of the young woman who stood confronting him in haughty displeasure.

"And do you tell me," he said, turning to Miss Blunt, and speaking in broken tones, "that this lady is the same—the little girl I left with you?"

"It is the same, sir. This is Florence, our pupil."

"I remember you now, sir," the clear, musical voice of Florence added, while she looked steadily at him; "and I have come to ask you—who were my guardian, and had the charge of me from my earliest years, who deserted me during all that time, leaving me to the tender mercies of strangers—who am I? and who were my parents? You have no right to keep that knowledge longer from me."

Every word she spoke pierced the heart of her audience. His face blanched to pallor, and became contracted with spasms of pain. He put out his hand feebly, as if to deprecate her anger, and with the other grasped the top of a chair from which he had risen.

Florence was touched by this emotion, and her voice softened.

"I ask your pardon, sir," she said, "if I seem to reproach you. But I suffer under a load of misery, that might have been averted had I not been left so desolate!"

Her voice was choked with tears.

Miss Blunt grasped her arm tremblingly.

"No, no, no! not desolate! We loved you, we did; you know it well, my child!"

Her pupil gently shook her off.

"You will not refuse to perform a tardy act of justice, I hope?" she said, addressing the colonel. "Tell me if my parents are living."

"They are," was the gasping reply.

"And where—where may I find them?"

"I have deserved punishment," groaned Atherton, in bitter anguish; "but I never dreamed that it would overtake me in this form!"

"How have you deserved punishment?" demanded Florence, eagerly. "Surely, sir, surely you did not steal me from my parents?"

"No, Florence; but I dare not tell you—"

"Dare not!" interrupted she, impetuously. "Then they were unworthy? At least, you would have me believe so! I cannot—I will not believe it!"

"Would you, then, pardon your father, if he implored your forgiveness?"

"If he had wronged me, yes. If he had sinned against the world, I would shield him from its censure, if I could."

"Oh, Heaven, I thank thee!" exclaimed Atherton, with clasped hands, and looking upward, while tears streamed down his cheeks.

"This is strange!" murmured the excited young woman.

"I claim the pardon you promise!" cried her guardian. "Florence Atherton, I am your father!"

"You!" echoed both ladies, in a breath.

"I have been most unhappy—I am so still. Only the burden of misery I have borne so long prevented my claiming you, and banished me so long from my country. I have neglected my duty; I have acted like a brute. I deserve that you should look coldly on me—that you should refuse to acknowledge me!"

He had sunk into the chair, and his face was bowed over his arms to hide the painful emotions that shook him from head to foot.

For a moment Florence struggled with her feelings, then she crossed over to where he sat and laid her arm caressingly over his neck. She was weeping, and her tones were tremulous and tender.

"If you are my father," she said, "I am but too happy to acknowledge you."

He lifted his face, looked in her pitying eyes an instant, then folded her in his arms.

Miss Blunt covered her eyes with her handkerchief, and cried from sympathy, after uttering a few ejaculations of surprise at the discovery that the guardian with whom she had corresponded was the father of her pupil.

She was revolving in her mind the chances of his finding out that she and her sister had continued to

receive his remittances during the absence of his daughter.

It was some time before the father and daughter, so newly reunited, were able to command their feelings sufficiently to speak.

Then Florence asked for her mother.

"This is no time, my child, to tell you her and my painful history. You shall have it all another day."

He glanced at Miss Blunt, and his listener understood that no strangers must hear it.

"And my sister—is she living? I knew that I had a sister once," she said.

"A half-sister—the child of my wife by her first marriage. When we separated—she took her child and left me the one she had borne to me, and to whom she seemed to have taken a dislike."

"I remember that too!" exclaimed Florence. "She used to punish me for singing, when my sister could not do it."

"There was some excuse for her," muttered her father; "but I did not know it at the time."

"Is she living here?"

"She was a short time since; but she had lost sight of her daughter, and was in search of her."

Florence clasped her hands in joy.

Was it indeed possible that the ties of family affection could be here? Her sanguine spirit saw no obstacle to the reconciliation of all parties.

"Now, my daughter," said the colonel, "you must allow me to ring and give orders to have your room prepared."

"Pray forgive my unwilling trespass so far," put in the ex-schoolmistress, "and, with my warmest congratulations, permit me now to leave you, dear Florence."

"No," interposed the young lady, "I will go home, and will ask you down at your hotel."

"I hoped that my daughter would regard this house as her home," sighed the colonel. "If you have me, Florence, I shall think you have not forgiven me."

"It is only for a short time, dear father," was the answer; "and how like heavenly melody that tender name fell on his heart. 'I have many things to arrange at the place I have called my home.'"

"And may I come to-morrow? I have so much to say to you."

"Certainly; I shall expect you. Good-night, dearest father."

She gave him a parting embrace, and went out with Miss Blunt.

As they took seats in the carriage the worthy ex-schoolmistress was felicitating herself on the fact that no allusion yet had been made to the little irregularity or embezzlement practised by herself or her sister.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE baleful influence of Mrs. Singleton in Mr. Halstead's house was working meanwhile secretly but surely.

She had to deal with trusting and generous natures, unsuspecting of evil, and not disposed to harbour prejudice. But her art was equal to the undertaking of sowing seeds of distrust and enmity that might, when anything occurred to favour their growth, spring up and bear fruit at once.

She had unlimited access to Myra, and a firmer mind than that of the volatile girl might have yielded to the subtle persuasion that, working day after day, was undermining her duty to her father as well as her sincere affection for her late conscientious governess, her gentle stepmother.

Impulsive and rash at all times, the girl began to look upon herself as wronged and ill-used in the family, and to indulge in petulant outbreaks, not always followed as formerly by repentant tears and resolutions of amendment. "Line upon line, precept upon precept," had tutored her to the belief that her only friend was Mrs. Singleton. She could not yet, however, be brought to listen to that lady's persuasions that Ray was her devoted lover, and had only her interests at heart, for Ray had lately grown cold and seemed to avoid her; and he was very often out on Mrs. Halstead's errands, or as her escort.

Upon Ray and Mr. Halstead the hearthstone serpent had no power. The young man was wrapped up in his own business and occupations, and had never shown a disposition to be hoodwinked by his mother. Halstead seemed to have eyes and ears only for his loving wife.

That she loved him absorbingly no one could doubt. She took no pleasure in the gay society of the city; she declined all invitations she did not feel compelled to accept. Her only happiness was in sharing the literary occupations of her husband, watching and waiting for him when absent, reading or singing to him, or driving out with him. Her present position filled her with supreme content. It was her first rest in a weary, struggling life.

"All very well," the mischief-maker said to her son, "if she had been of good family, or had creditable antecedents. But who knows anything about them?"

"Dear mother," sighed Ray, "let the woman alone. How often have I begged you not to trouble yourself about her antecedents."

"If you would only tell me what you know, Ray," said the lady, "there would be no occasion. I am sure you know more than you will reveal."

"Once for all, whatever I know I shall keep to myself."

"Oh, yes; she has got you completely over to her side—foolish boy."

"I do not know why there should be any 'other side' in the matter."

"She has blinded her husband utterly."

"She has made him love her, like a good wife."

"And you will calmly see his princely estate—your inheritance—pass from you, after his death, to the children of an adventurer!"

"To Cousin Halstead's children, certainly. After his death! I am not sure of living to see that. He is not an old man, you know."

"Raymond, you are incorrigible!"

"I would say that of you, mother, if it were not disrespectful. Come, let this matter drop. Leave our cousin to the handsome wife he has been fortunate enough to secure, and don't envy him or her. I had never any right to expect the property."

"Why, you are the next heir."

"You forget his daughters."

"You were to marry her."

"It is not likely I shall."

"Have you ever proposed to her?"

"No; because I know she would refuse me. By the way, where is Myra? I have not seen her to-day."

"Gone out, I believe, with Sylvia as her attendant. I don't like that, either. She spends half the afternoons out of late, shopping, she says."

"I do not like it either. A girl of Myra's beauty and impulsive manners ought to be under the safeguard of an elderly friend."

"So I tell Mrs. Halstead half a dozen times a day."

"You might speak to her father. Or you might accompany her more frequently."

"I have no time and no fancy for such long walks. And it is not my business to look after the girl. If you would pay court to her in earnest, Ray, she might prefer your society to that of other beaux."

"You speak significantly, mother. Do you suppose Myra meets young men in her afternoon walks?"

"I do not suppose it; I know she does."

"Any one in particular?"

"Yes; you know how wilful she is."

Raymond groaned in spirit.

"After her father had forbidden her meeting that young fellow, too."

"Mother, this is terrible. Can nothing be done?"

"You might interfere, if you chose."

"How can I? It is such a delicate matter."

"Ray, you have neglected the girl of late. It is my opinion, that if you had played the attentive lover, she would have liked you best, and shaken off the other. But you scarcely notice her; and she does not like it!"

"How do you know she does not?"

"I have seen her look at you often with a pouting expression of chagrin. I have seen her inattentive to her admirers' conversation while watching your movements."

"You are mistaken, mother; Myra does not honour me so far. I do not think she even tolerates me."

"She was vexed yesterday because you escorted Mrs. Halstead to the concert, and did not ask her."

"That could not be; for I heard her say she was going with Mr. Wyatt, before I asked Cousin Clarice."

Mrs. Singleton sighed and turned away, muttering something about her plans being always thwarted by her obstinate son.

Raymond walked to the window, which opened on a pretty but narrow lawn, shaded by tall evergreen trees.

The retired situation of the house, and its distance from the compact streets of the town, gave it the attraction and the salubrious air of a country seat.

From the window he saw Myra stop at the gate.

She had been attended by a gentleman, young Singleton's beating heart told him by whom, and Sylvia lagged behind. As her mistress stopped at the gate she came up and joined her.

The gentleman had bidden her adieu a little while before, and walked away, turning more than once to look back, while the young lady waved her farewell and kissed her hand to him.

Her face was radiant in beauty, and all smiles, as



[A NEW-FOUND PARENT.]

she came to the door, and entering, passed up the stairs to her own room, followed by Sylvia. The girl presently came out and went downstairs and out to the kitchen.

"Shall you not wait to see her?" asked Mrs. Singleton, as she saw her son take up his hat to go.

"I think not," the young man answered.

"As you please, of course. I am tired of plotting in your behalf, and shall do nothing more."

"A wise resolve, good mother. Never do any 'plotting.' Conspirators always come to grief. Good morning."

He tried to speak jestingly, but the lady could see that he was disturbed and uncomfortable. She followed him to the porch.

As he was about to open the door they saw Sylvia rush in at the rear entrance, in evident alarm and haste, and fly upstairs to the room of her mistress.

The next instant they heard Myra scream wildly, and saw her at the top of the stairs, her hair loosened, her eyes blazing, her face white with terror.

She came down the stairs like a stormy petrel, followed by her maid.

"What is the matter, child?" cried Mrs. Singleton, intercepting her.

"Let me alone! Don't stop me! I may be too late!" cried the girl as she rushed out of the house by the rear door, her light dress and waving hair floating behind her as she ran.

Raymond and his mother followed her, and came into the midst of the assembled house-servants, who appeared panic-stricken.

"What has happened?" the young man asked.

"Master has ordered Silas to shoot Bruno; and Miss Myra ran to save him."

"To shoot Bruno?" exclaimed Mrs. Singleton. "Is the dog mad, then?"

"Dunno, ma'am. He's bit Mrs. Halstead on the arm."

"He has bitten Mrs. Halstead!" echoed Ray.

"She never liked the dog," put in his mother; "and Bruno hated her."

She went after her son, and the servants followed them to the stables, in the rear of which they heard loud cries and weeping.

It was truly a sad sight. Poor Myra's interposition had come too late. The sentence had been executed. The noble dog lay on the ground in a pool of blood flowing from his death-wound. Myra had thrown herself beside him and was trying to lift him up.

The man who had executed the cruel order, unwilling to encounter the reproaches of his young mistress, had taken himself away.

Mrs. Singleton burst into tears and ejaculations, lamenting the dog's fate, but never bestowing a thought on what the wife of his master might have suffered.

Raymond went and took Myra's arm, lifting her up. "Dear cousin," he pleaded, "come into the house."

"Raymond, do you see that?" she cried, passionately. "My own Bruno, my noble dog, savagely murdered!"

"Is he quite dead?" Ray asked of one of the servants.

"Oh, yes, sir; shot through the heart."

Myra burst into fresh wailings, not at all lightened by Mrs. Singleton's sympathetic lamentations.

"Bring her to the house; this is no fit place for her," Ray said to his mother.

"I will be revenged!" screamed the excited girl. "They shall suffer for it, they shall! My poor, poor Bruno!"

"Silas had to do it," observed one of the servants.

"Master ordered him to do it. He's very angry because the dog bit Mrs. Halstead."

"And I wish he had killed her!" cried the young girl. "I do wish he had killed her!"

"It was very wicked in her—very wicked indeed," said Mrs. Singleton, "to bear such malice towards the poor brute!"

"Mother, don't speak in that manner!" said her son.

"I will give my opinion of her cruel conduct! What had the dog done to her, that she should want him killed?"

One of the servants answered:

"The dog came at her in the road; sprang on her, and she beat him off with her parasol; and then he flew at her and bit her arms; and master ordered Silas to shoot him."

"And I will punish her, and him too!" sobbed the girl. "My poor dog! she always hated him! She shall suffer for it."

"Dogs have sure instinct," artfully observed Mrs. Singleton. "They always know who is their enemy."

They had come up to the house, and finding his efforts to soothe entirely unavailing, Raymond took his leave. Mrs. Singleton entered the house with her arm supporting the weeping girl.

They passed up the stairs to the bed-chambers. That of Mrs. Halstead was open. She sat in an easy-chair, with a dressing-gown on, and one of the sleeves ripped. Her maid was bathing her wounded arm, while Halstead stood on one side.

"Call Myra in," his wife said to him.

He stepped to the door and requested his daughter to come in.

Her stepmother stretched out her hand towards her.

"Myra, my child," she said tenderly, "I am very sorry for this, but I could not help it; indeed I could not."

The girl broke from the arm of Mrs. Singleton, and strode forward, confronting her stepmother, but refusing to take her hand.

"Why need you be a hypocrite, Clarice Halstead?" she exclaimed, fire flashing in her blue eyes, her cheeks scarlet with rage. "You always hated my dog! You have killed him because you hated him—because you hated me!"

"Myra," said her father, sternly, "how dare you speak so? Clarice was savagely attacked by your dog when she came to meet me on my return home."

"And she struck him; she beat him with her parasol," almost shrieked Myra.

"She defended herself, parrying his attack and beating him off. What do you mean, girl, by all these outcries? Look at your mother's arm."

"She deserves it; she killed my poor dog."

"Girl, you are insane! It was I who ordered him to be shot! Clarice begged me to spare him for your sake."

"I did, Myra; I did not want to have him killed."

"I do not believe you!" retorted the girl. "You have always hated him! Dogs do not fly at people and bite them if they are kindly treated. You are guilty of the murder."

"Myra," interposed her father, "if you dare to speak in this way—go to your room."

"I would rather she had killed me; then the law would have punished her."

"Leave the room this instant."

"Come, dear child!" coaxingly said Mrs. Singleton, and she drew her out of the chamber.

The surgeon came in as they entered Myra's room. He dressed Mrs. Halstead's arm, after asking if they had any reason to suppose the dog had been mad.

Mr. Halstead thought not; the servants had all testified to his perfect health and quiet disposition for months past. But he had always been fonder, and very apt to take a dislike to some one person in particular. That was a peculiarity of his race.

The doctor did not apprehend any danger from the wound, and after giving the lady a composing mixture he departed.

(To be continued).



FAIR ANNE OF CLY. THE STORY OF A LIFE'S AMBITION.

CHAPTER XIII.

It were a journey like the path to heaven
To help you find them. Milton.

THE hut of the fisherman who had so freely offered his rough but generous hospitality was again occupied by Will Darian and his happy-minded follower. The fisherman had carried Will there when he fell, and Nixon, more faithful than a dog and kind-hearted as a woman, would not leave him for one instant. Johnny was despatched to the town, half a mile off, for such things as the groom thought would be wanted, while the lad's father assisted in restoring the young farmer's dormant senses.

"He looks a strong 'un," remarked the weather-beaten old salt. "I never thought he'd felt so much the sad news. Was one o' the ladies dear to him?"

"Very," involuntarily replied Nixon.

"Oh," sighed the other, "then I can understand it. I had a wife myself once, and before she were my wife she were my sweetheart. I couldn't a' stood losin' on her either way, so I thought, but she was snapped up when I least expected it, poor Mary!"

"Don't think of it like that, Mr. Seagail," said Nixon, kindly, "I know what a 'art is. But try and think it were for the best."

"So I do," answered Mr. Seagail, with a grim, complacent sorrow in his face and voice. "I didn't at fust—I couldn't, mate. Just think. I lost my little gal when she were four year old, and afore she were under-ground a week poor Mary went too. I was better off when she were here, but I turned wild-like and reckless; I wanted to die, and so went into drink and danger!"

Nixon turned slowly upon the speaker, his eyes expressed a stern rebuke, his face would have done the same had it been possible for his comic, good-natured features to compose themselves into anything like sternness.

"Try to die and turn drunkard, with that little chap to look after?"

"Ay, ay, you may well say that; but I forgot him then, forgot him until I was a beggar, then I came to my senses and the little chap's image came back to my 'art. I allers loved him, I loved him more than for Mary's sake, and I've been steady ever since and worked hard, but only for him, poor lad."

"Glad to hear you say this, Mr. Seagail," said Nixon, bending over the still form of Will Darian.

[BEARDING THE LION.]

"whilst you work for him you'll work for yourself, and it's your duty to think of the lad."

The lad returned at that moment with sundry spirits and provisions, which he had bought in the town.

It was quite dark when Will, restored to consciousness, sat up in the small bed and took from Nixon some cold fowl and ham and hot tea made by his useful follower.

"Don't despair, Mr. William, not yet. It's not right, by no means. Only think, Mr. William, how much you might do if you'd only eat and drink; it'll make you strong, and if you're strong you can see if there's any chance of finding my young missus."

"Finding her—how—when? You know not what you say. Heaven! to think she should have come to this. There is no hope, no hope I tell you, Nixon. Who's to save her? when is she to be saved, after being cast into the sea? All through folly, mad folly, and those who are guilty of that folly little thought that death was hanging on its heels."

"Look here, Mr. William, if you take on so, and don't keep quiet, I'll chuck myself into the sea. Upon my word, if it was in my natur' you'd make me quite miserable as well as pained."

"Ah, Nixon, if you only knew what that one life was to me—"

He broke off, as if he had said too much, or if he did not (and he did not) know that when the plank bearing the "Antelope's" name was held up to him his secret was out.

"Yes, I do, Mr. William, but it's wrong, it is, to give up. How many people 'ave lived on a spar for days and days? It's better to eat and drink and get strong and go and search for poor Miss Lynn."

Nixon dwelt most emphatically upon the eating and drinking, and not without some effect, for Will ate and drank better than might have been expected under the circumstances, and Nixon felt much relieved in mind.

"I'll do it, Nixon," Will cried, suddenly, "no matter what it costs."

"Do what, Mr. William?"

"Search about this part of the coast. Chance and Providence might aid us. Heaven only knows."

The poor fellow spoke hurriedly, almost piteously.

"Where is Mr. Seagail?"

"Gone down to get his boat ready, Mr. William, to go to sea."

"That's all the better. He will take me with him," said Will, getting off the Lilliputian bed.

"But you won't go out till it's light, Mr. William?" cried Nixon, alarmed.

"I shall go at once, Nixon; you had better remain here until I return."

The comic face of Nixon grew ludicrously grave as he glanced askance up at the young farmer's pale face.

"He don't mean to chuck himself over the boat's side, does he?" Nixon thought.

"Where is my hat, Nixon?"

"Somewhere down here, Mr. William. Here it is."

"Let us go down to the beach, Nixon; you are sure Seagail is there?"

"Unless he's coming back to the hut, Mr. William," replied Nixon, opening the door of the little hovel and peering out through the darkness of the night.

Voices in low, sullen intercourse came upon his ears, and he fancied he heard the heavy tread of many heavy feet coming on towards the fisherman's home.

The light of a large lantern that was swinging in a man's hand made visible to Nixon the owners of the heavy feet and sullen voices—a small group of men, carrying something in their midst.

Young Johnny was between his home and the group of men, making all haste to get indoors, perhaps to apprise his father's guests of something that had happened.

"What's up?" asked Nixon.

"Found a man," said Johnny, briefly.

"Where?"

"In the sea, washed up on the beach. Think he belonged to the 'Antelope.'"

Will came out then. The possibility of the man being the Hon. G. Clancourdy at once flashed across his mind. Mr. Seagail came up now. Four of his companions were carrying the castaway on a jib sheet and Will Darian peered over their shoulders to scan the white, ghastly face, and it was not the face of Clancourdy.

"One of the hands of the yacht, sir," said Seagail, seeing Will's anxious look of inquiry.

The poor fellow was taken into the hut, and he was laid down to rest. Life was far from extinct, consciousness had not entirely fled, the poor fellow suffered mostly from exhaustion, but he was not dead.

Wine, spirits, and food were obtained for him at Will's expense, and his sturdy frame began to resume its natural warmth and much of its wonted strength.

Very impatiently Will waited to hear from him all that he might know concerning the cruel disaster.

Hour after hour passed and daylight came before the sailor's heavy slumber ended, and then he awoke in pain, but not too pained to speak.

The brief tale he had to tell was a singular one. He had been on board the Hon. George Clancourdy's yacht. When that gentleman came on board he

brought with him two ladies. It was at first supposed that Clancurdy only intended an excursion, but after cruising about the coast during the day he made for Dieppe, evidently against the wish of one of the ladies, and it got whispered amongst the crew that Clancurdy intended to marry the lady at some English church in France, even if she slightly objected.

The "Antelope" never reached its destination. Rough weather came on, the sea was very boisterous, and the mist that hung upon the water was so dense as to render anything ten yards from the yacht entirely indistinguishable.

The captain of the yacht feared to make for the harbour of Dieppe in such darkness and while the sea was so rough, and Clancurdy consented to having the "Antelope" kept well away from shore. Things might have gone on well all night, and morning would have been certain safety, but fate had ordained otherwise. The "Antelope" was beaten over on her side in one of the huge troughs of the howling, roaring water, and the position was imminently critical.

It was doubtful whether the yacht would right herself again, as a good deal of her ballast had shifted leeward. The men on board were powerless; it took all their presence of mind and strength to save themselves from being washed over the low bulwarks into the sea. In the moment the yacht was lifted on the crest of an enormous wave, the men opened their eyes, the blinding spray no longer beating into them, and glanced as well as they could around them.

The yacht was once more sinking into another gulf, and the men still clung on to ropes and sails, but this time with the agonised despair of certain death, whose coming they announced by a wild and fearful shout that rent the thick air and echoed far away.

Coming right upon them was a vessel of tremendous size. Already she was too near to turn from the dangerous course, and the cries of the men were drowned by the bursting of the huge main-deck, and in one minute the disaster was begun and ended.

The fearful crash caused by the collision, and the more fearful cries that came from the men on board the "Antelope," were heard by the watch on board the larger vessel, and they detected too the screams of women, and the captain endeavoured to bring his barque to while the boats were lowered, and twenty minutes afterwards four boats manned by able, sturdy fellows were searching amongst the fragments of the wrecked yacht for living human beings.

The sailor did not give very minute details after that point. He, poor fellow, was left at the mercy of the frantic sea, with only the foretopmast-yard to support him, and while the boats were engaged picking up his mates and the ladies he was carried too far away by the giant waves to be either heard or seen.

Daylight came, and the outward-bound vessel was still hovering about—the sailor could see that well enough, but he was not discovered, and the vessel sailed away.

"I knew the ship," said the castaway, by way of finish. "I served on board her for two years, she'll lay to at Liverpool for three days afore going on."

"Liverpool?" said Will Darian, despairingly. "And suppose I go to Liverpool to be there when she arrives, am I certain that Miss Lynn has been picked up?"

"You can almost swear to it, sir," said the sailor. "I heard the cheers when they were hauled in the boats, and then heard the lust cry out, 'Now for the men.'"

Will's heart beat high with hope, and he at once determined to start at daylight for Liverpool, much to the relief of Nixon, who had feared the young farmer would go cruising about in a fishing-boat.

Will very handsomely paid Mr. Seagill for his hospitality, and made the sailor a present; little Johnny was not forgotten either, and the fisherman only hoped that circumstances would throw a few more such as Will in his way.

At daylight Will and his follower left the fisherman's hut, and started for Liverpool. To Will, who was so unused to travelling, the journey was an endless one, lengthened too by the anxiety that was tearing at his heart.

They arrived at Liverpool at night, far too late to make any inquiries, and so were forced to put up at an hotel till morning. In the breakfast-room at an early hour next day Will picked up a sheet of a newspaper. It was of a previous date, but one paragraph caught his eye entirely took away what little appetite he had screwed together, and added to the pain as well as the perplexity of his mind. The paragraph was that one containing the announcement of his sister's marriage.

"Anne married," muttered Will. "Ladybird gone from us like this, and while I was away! What will Sidney say? Who could have done it?"

It was not in Will's nature to get into a temper, or he would have shown it now; as it was he in-

wardly groaned. The marriage that was so much glory to his sister was regarded by him as a calamity.

"Please, Mr. William," said Nixon, coming into the breakfast-room unobserved by Will.

"Well, Nixon?"

"The ship's arrived."

"You are sure it's the right one?"

"Yes, Mr. William, the 'North Star.'"

"Has any one come ashore?"

"Yes, Mr. William, a castaway they picked up at sea."

"Not a lady?"

"Yes, Mr. William, a lady."

"Her name?" demanded the young farmer, starting up from his seat and standing erect, while his lips quivered.

"I couldn't find that out, Mr. William," answered Nixon; "but they say she's stayin' at Bagley's Hotel."

Not a moment longer did Will delay. Without any breakfast he started out, called a public vehicle and was driven to Bagley's Hotel. Will at once asked to see the proprietor, who was at least half an hour coming.

"Mr. Bagley?" asked Will.

"Yes, sir," he answered, rather coldly, for Mr. Bagley had carefully read Will's status at a glance.

"There is a lady here who came off the 'North Star' English steamer?"

"There are three, sir."

"But you know the names?" asked Will.

"Names, I am sure! Hum! Really I have forgotten, but I will refer to the books. But then you know the lady you want. Is either the invalid lady or Mrs. — Mrs. —"

"No, it's not Mrs. —" retorted Will. "I want Miss Lynn."

"Ah, I think that is the name, sir. If you will send your card up —"

Will coloured a little. He had never indulged in such things as cards. He was almost ashamed to admit the truth now, but there was no help for it.

"I haven't one."

"Hum! You can send your name up, if you please."

"Mr. William Darian."

"Darian? Yes, sir."

Mr. Bagley began now to call somewhat loudly for a chambermaid by the universal name of Jane, and Jane, looking no different to any other Jane, came running downstairs.

"Go up and see if the sick lady can see this gentleman—Mr. William Darian," said the hotel master. Jane, out of breath, said "Yes, sir," and away she went, as though she could read in Will's face the impatience that was at his heart.

Down came Jane again, and Will stepped eagerly forward.

"Please, sir, if you'll only wait half an hour the lady will see you."

"Thank you," he said, turning from the stairs with a sigh. "Oh, Kate, Kate, if this was the only half-hour I had to wait, why —"

His thoughts sailed away as he sat down, and with his face in his hands he dreamed the lingering half-hour away.

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh, life! thou art a galling load
Along a rough, a weary road;
To wretches such as I.

Burns.

ALMOST AN HOUR over the time, and the lordly bridegroom had not arrived.

The faces of the visitors began to grow blank, and Anne's heart grew faint and dull.

Was it possible, she thought, that he might not come after all? that the golden dream of her life was after all to be snatched from her for ever? No such thing happened, in spite of her fears. Fate had cast the die of her destiny. She was to be Lady Dalyell; for what purpose, for what happiness or misery or grandeur or despair, the future alone could show.

When the funny little duke was about to propose that Anne should return to the Hyde a carriage was seen to come swiftly down the dusty road leading to the church.

Every eye, dilated and expectant, watched the vehicle approach, and so rapidly did the horses come along that in less than three minutes the carriage dashed up to the church door, and the earl, stern and pale, alighted, followed by his groomsmen, a handsome stranger—friend of his lordship's and slight acquaintance of the duke's.

He was evidently under thirty years of age, tall, and of the splendid patrician type so rarely seen. His face was positively beautiful, his eyes were something finer than few have seen in man, while his grace and carriage were exceptional.

Though Anne's eyes were upon her husband she could not help seeing the stranger, and for a moment

her eyes were riveted upon his. He seemed startled at her beauty, and while he looked his eyes fascinated Anne.

Dalyell went to Anne and explained his lateness in a few words.

"There was an accident on the railway line," he said.

And then the proceedings commenced.

Anne bore up wonderfully well, she might have borne up much better had not the handsome stranger placed himself on every possible occasion in a position that enabled him to look into her lovely face and fascinate her eyes.

The solemn ceremony was over at last, and Anne, now the Countess of Dalyell, was led out by her husband through the double row of spectators that lined the way, and amongst them she saw the gigantic figure of her father and the calm, pallid face of her mother.

She could not go to them, the people were crowding their way in and pushing each other against the wall to give room for the bride to pass, but at the very moment the passage was made for her Anne uttered a cry and recoiled back, for two forms stood right in the doorway—two faces, one so white and ghastly, so haggard and hopeless in its expression of utter despair that it seemed to her the face of an apparition instead of that of Sidney Cardiff, living, but as changed! The figure by his side was that of the young viscount.

They knew not each other, they were scarcely conscious of each other's presence. Sidney had only eyes for Anne. Arthur divided his glances between his father and the bride.

"You have done well," he said, with his cold laugh, "to jilt the son for the father," and then he laughed again, but had no time to say any more.

The earl frowned darkly upon his son and strode on, hearing but not heeding the dreadful exclamation Sidney uttered, the frightful anathema he invoked in his mad fury upon the head of her he had loved.

It was a moment of dire confusion, in which the little crowd of spectators got round the wedding party and rushed in a mob to the carriage doors.

There were shouting and hurrahs, flowers strewn and hurled about, and a flood of music from the organ in the church.

Then the noise and din stopped, the music ceased, and Sidney found himself in front of his aunt and uncle. The carriage had driven away.

"Sidney," said the farmer, huskily, "come home with me."

From one face to the other roamed Sidney's haggard glance. He spoke not then; the effort to speak almost choked him.

"We were not to blame, Sidney," said Mrs. Darian, stricken home by Sidney's speechless agony. "Come back with us, darling."

She laid her hand upon his shoulder, and the tones had more effect than their words.

He shrank away; his ashen lips moved and trembled painfully as he spoke at last.

"No, no! Go away, please. Leave me to myself. Do not speak to me now. It's your fault, all your fault."

"Pooh, pooh, foolish boy," said Darian, half-angored, yet touched by his nephew's aspect. "Come back with us."

"Soon, soon," was Sidney's only answer, uttered in a vacant, wandering way, as he turned and went towards the grounds at the back of the church.

The grounds at the back of the church were occupied by small graves and large tombstones bearing the last sad memento of lives always dear when lost, though so little of while they lasted.

Upon one of these moss-covered homes of the dead Sidney laid his head, his face was buried in his hands and he wept in the bitterness of his heart-crushing sorrow.

"Oh, Anne, Anne!" he sobbed, "was this your revenge for my own mad act? And is this the end of our long years of love, our promised union? I might have been warned at least. Oh, miserable life! oh, the dreary, dreary future! Why, why were we taught to love? Oh, woman, were you made for this, for this alone?"

Fast and thick his tears fell upon the sward on which he rested, fast and thick they welled up from his grief-laden heart, until the fountain of sorrow seemed almost dry, and the burning fire of intense despair scorched his very soul; and then he conquered the fierce impulse to do something that is an unholy wrong—the impulse to die by his own hand.

He got up and sat upon the grave—his elbows were placed on his knees, his face in his hands—and began to brood upon the blank that made his heart desolate and turned his mind astray.

He heard not the footfall of the young viscount behind him—saw not the slender, youthful figure; but Arthur was there, watching him whom he now

knew to have been his rival with all the compassion that belonged to his varying nature.

Sidney did not move, and Arthur thought to awake him from his sad dependency. He had hesitated, he thought, long enough; his hesitation was not that of fear.

"You are not the only sufferer," he said, tapping Sidney Cardiff lightly on the shoulder; and Sidney started to his feet.

His bloodshot, haggard eyes questioned the stranger's right to interfere; his attitude was menacing and anger apparent; but Arthur only smiled sadly and kindly.

The light of recognition flashed across Sidney's face, and he spoke at the moment the young viscount was about to speak.

"Arthur!" said young Cardiff, stepping back. "Yes, Sidney, I am Arthur," and then the two young men looked at each other. There was all the appearance of aggressive hostility in Sidney's mind, Arthur only stood calm and pale with the old strange quiet upon him. "I did not know you knew me or my name."

"Knew you?" repeated Sidney, bitterly. "I should have known you twenty years hence; I would have traced the lineaments of your face in the shadows of night. Have you not been the means of all this from beginning to end? But for your miniature and your letter I should not in a fit of madness have threatened to strike her, we should never have parted, never have lost each other, as we have, for life. I wonder you come upon me, I wonder you stand there, for I feel that I shall leap upon you—that I could crush you to death as I crushed your likeness to atoms beneath my heel."

Arthur could tell now how it was that Sidney knew him. He could vaguely understand the young man's fearful vehemence, but not one muscle of his face changed, there was no anger in the deep dawning glance of his large black eyes.

"I was an innocent cause of all this, then," he said, quietly. "Had I known who was her betrothed you would never have seen my miniature nor my letter. I saw her and began to love her; the miniature she asked for, the letter I wrote. Tell me calmly am I the wronger or the wronged? For Miss Darian never said she was loved and you loved her; she never said she loved you. I am bewildered to know how she could love my father."

"Your father?" said Sidney. "Then perdition seize him and you, and all of you!"

His violent temper broke out in all its uncontrollable fury then, and, forming at the mouth with madness, he rushed at Arthur with deadly fury in his heart.

"What are you doing? Keep off—keep back! Will you not let us be friends? I am sure you will not be sorry for it afterwards."

"I was mad—mad with passion and blind to reason. You will forgive me?"

"Truly, my dear Sidney, if you will let us be friends."

He held out his hand. Sidney took it now and wrung it cordially and then retained it in his own.

"Tell me," he said, "how you knew her."

"Yes, by-and-by, not now. Let me take you home, shall I?"

"Not to my uncle's, no—no! I cannot go there, never—never!"

"Will you come with me then?"

"Yes. Anywhere away from here."

He was upon his feet now. He was deeply sorry for what had happened. The generous conduct of the young viscount made him feel the humiliation all the more acutely.

"Come, Sidney, let us go. Shall we go to London? It is better we should be there—do you not think so?"

"I am better," answered Sidney, dreamily, following Arthur out of the churchyard into the lane, where Sidney was brought to a stand by the appearance of Master Tommy.

CHAPTER XV.

To know, to esteem, to love, and then to part,
Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart.

Coleridge.

From the church back to the Hyde was a rapid journey, and the wedding-party forgot what had happened by the time they stood round the table, on which a sumptuous breakfast was spread.

The Earl of Dalryell and his friends scarcely gave Sidney a second thought.

His conduct to them seemed a vulgar show of mere vulgar feeling. They had no sympathy for his white, agonized face, and would only have laughed had they known the true cause of it.

Anno even had been too well schooled by Madame Marville to show how deeply she was affected by the occurrence. She could keep down reason while Sid-

ney was away, but the sight of his white, despairing face did not easily fade from her memory.

"Permit me to take your ladyship's fan and bouquet," said the low, mellow voice of the young marquis, and Anne looked up into his remarkably handsome face, thrilled by the sweetness of his voice, again almost fascinated by the gleam of his eyes and the homage that came with the title she bore.

"Thank you," she answered, smiling.

"Ah," he said, "you put too much temptation in my way. Will you not deliver me from the evil of theft by giving me permission to take one—only a small one—of these flowers?"

Anno smiled and nodded an assent.

The young marquis took a choice flower from the bouquet, placed it in his buttonhole, and sat down to breakfast.

The bride placed the knife in the cake, and then business commenced.

Of course the old Duke of Dabbercourt had a good deal to say, in a jesting way, about the flower in the buttonhole of the marquis's coat; then came two or three very brief speeches—kind acknowledgments on the bridegroom's side, and the announcement, from without, that the carriage was ready.

Madame Marville rose at once and followed Anne to the dressing-room, where she equipped herself for the journey and came down into the reception-room expecting, and finding her parents there.

There might have been a scene had not Madame Marville been attentively on the watch and presented herself before Anne at the opportune moment, and so Anne tore herself away to bid good-bye to her friends.

The young marquis was the last to whom she bid adieu.

"It is more than probable I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in Italy. I have told Warton sq. and he expects it," he said.

"Then I shall expect you too," said Anne, with an affected little laugh. "Do not forget your promise."

She stepped into the carriage, the earl seated himself beside her, and the carriage drove away.

Ten minutes later the marquis and the Duke of Dabbercourt strolled out of the grounds arm in arm and Madame Marville went back to the room in which Mr. and Mrs. Darian were watching from the window the departure of the bride and bridegroom.

Something like a dull pang smote the farmer and his wife when the carriage was out of sight; there was a dark cloud over the sky, darkening the sight of the sun and forming vague shadows on the gravel path beneath the window, shadows out of which Mrs. Darian's sensitive, imaginative mind formed strange and tangible forebodings of the future.

Both she and the farmer seemed anxious to leave the great house now.

Madame Marville came in and behaved with marked condensation towards the parents of her now mistress; she might have played the hostess had not her good intentions been not only indifferently received but politely objected to by the farmer and his wife, who assured her that they must get home at once, and so they went, leaving the ex-schoolmistress queen of all she surveyed.

The journey home was not a cheerful one, being performed in silence.

The painful effect Sidney's appearance had left on the Darrians was fresh upon them now; his bitter words were still ringing in their ears, his wild, staring eyes and white, haggard face, a sadly true reflection of the agony in his heart, were still before them, and so no wonder each shunned the topic that was painful to both.

The farm looked quiet, almost desolate. It was bad enough when Sidney left, but to have him taken away and Will to be absent made it almost unbearable.

"It is not like the old home, mother," Darian said, when they got in, and he had seated himself gloomily in a chair.

"We miss our children, Peter. It is natural we should, but they have not gone from us for ever. If they have we must not forget that we had parents once who were left by us, as we are left now by ours. It is the natural course of life."

"True, true, wife, but like many truths is nevertheless painful."

We must not forget, Peter, that there is still one to cheer our fireside, one who must have our consideration and our love as the others have had it."

At that moment the subject of her conversation came in.

Master Tommy, like his father, seemed considerably cast down by the late events.

"Father," said the boy, "won't Sidney or Anne never come back no more?"

"Speak not of them, my son," said the farmer, starting up and going out of the house to relieve his mind by seeking occupation on the farm.

Anno would come back in time, as did Sidney, but not to stay, he came in at dark, looking no better than he had been in the morning; but there was a quiet look of settled resolution on his face that made Mr. Darian shudder.

"I have not come to stay," he said, by way of beginning. "If I have by my own act brought on what has happened—by my own free will I shall henceforth look after myself."

"Oh! Sidney, Sidney!" cried Mrs. Darian, rising from her seat and going towards him.

"Never, it is best that we should not make matters worse, my grief is deep, but my resolution is strong. Never could I feel happy or content under this roof, and to prevent the very worst consequences of my despair I must seek a new life amidst the busy hum of a great metropolis. A time may come when the wound in my heart may be healed, when this time may be forgotten, and then I will return, perhaps a better and a wiser man."

He paused for a minute; neither his aunt nor uncle spoke. The farmer was pale, and stood with his great chest rooked by a terrible emotion. The words of his nephew stung him, and pride came to the aid of his grief.

"I have concluded," Sidney went on, "that it would be wise for me to be responsible now for that which belongs to me. What money you have that was left by father I should like put to my account. If there is none I must go without, but remember that I will neither receive nor acknowledge anything that is not given over to me alone."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" asked Darian. "Can you think that, though you are under age, I would keep one iota of what is yours? No, sir; it is well you have come. I can settle the matter in a few minutes. Thank Heaven, I have had no need to touch one farthing of the three thousand pounds left you by your father. You will have it entire, and remember, Sidney, that this is your own seeking, and, whether it should be your downfall or salvation, remember there is no one but yourself to thank for it."

"No one but myself," retorted Sidney, with a short, hysterical laugh. "Uncle, you and aunt too looked upon me as a boy in soul and mind as I am a lad in years. You brought me up and reared me in the sunshine of Anne's beauty and her girlish love. My heart has all these years only woven and woven round her image." He was growing husky and his voice quivered, but he went on. "And yet for one rash act to which I was driven you have thus punished me, aided and consented to the alliance of your daughter with that heartless lord, whose gold and glitter are taken in lieu of my inborn love. You might have been merciful, knowing I was taught by you to live for Anne alone. Had you ever seen the foreshadowing of this coil why was I not sent from this house. My life was shattered and wrecked at a blow?"

"Sidney, Sidney, have mercy upon us!" cried Mrs. Darian. "It was by no will of ours that—"

"Hold your tongue, mother!" cried Darian, sternly. "This rash boy, heedless of all we have said and can say, taken upon himself to chide us for a wrong that we never created. He would part with us and go his own way in the world. Let him. But even now I say, with Heaven above to witness, that he goes by no act or wish of mine, and whether he comes back in one year or ten, whether he comes back shoeless, dishonoured, and lost, the door of this old homestead shall never, I swear, be closed against him."

And then, perhaps to hide his emotion, the farmer left the room and hastily went upstairs, returning in a few minutes with the letters and papers that would enable him to have full and complete control over his money.

The scene that followed was one of those that are too painful to be forgotten in a lifetime. Pride was battling against love in the farmer's heart, agony and disappointment against the fond yearning in Mrs. Darian's heart, and Sidney, young, impetuous, but still with the most tender feelings for his relations still tearing and tagging at the very fountain of his ardent love, and while the evil spirit was whispering him on to tear himself away, the voice that had spoken so often in his childhood's days, and bade him reverence those who were all the world to him, bade him stay.

But it could not be. The memory of his mad, felonious act must die out ere he could hold up his head again in the old town of Cly. He must go forth and learn some of the world's cold reasoning, some of its selfish philosophy, before he could train himself to meet the Countess of Dalryell as he should meet another man's wife, without a pang, without a thought, but that would exist in the mind of the simplest stranger.

So he nerved himself for the ordeal of separation, the first separation that had come in his young life; a tearless good-bye, a few smiling promises of a better future, a tearful blessing from his aunt, and a

lucky, tender farewell from the sturdy farmer, and Sidney tore himself away from the old homestead.

Once outside, he fled lest he should hear his aunt's wailing cry, and did not pause till the gate at the end of the carriage-drive shut him out from the scene of his boyhood, perhaps for ever.

He paused then, paused with a lump rising in his throat and hot tears standing in his eyes, as he stood gazing with a long yearning glance at the old house, sinking gradually into the twilight shadows, whose gloom settled upon his heart, chilling its warmth with a bitter warning of what was to come. Oh, so dreary this twilight seemed, and so dreary was the unknown path that lay before him.

What would be the end, who should say? He dared not, could not think, he only wailed out Anne's name, and then, bowing his head in his hands, sobbed as he had never sobbed before.

"Cardiff—Sidney!" said a tender, almost effeminate voice, and a small soft hand was laid gently on his shoulder. "Come, let us go together, I never knew a home even such as yours. A father who never was a father to me has shut his door upon me. All the dear and sacred ties of my life are broken; but I cannot weep, I wish I could. But there must be a purpose in life for us to fulfil, surely there must be something worth living for. Let us see, let us seek that something in the future; 'ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find.' Let us work upon it in good faith. Sydney, come."

As the young viscount uttered the word "come," he drew Sidney gently on, and the twilight deepening over the old homestead and around his heart shut out one from his eyes and left the other hollow, cold and desolate.

(To be continued.)

JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

Lady Juliette's Secret, "The Rose of Kemdale," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There murder lurks behind the victim's chair,
With hand upraised and cruel weapon bare.

Marcell Fox.

Mrs. WILCOX having ordered coffee and egg, was shown into a coffee-room. There was no need for fire at that warm and pleasant season.

Seated before a table she waited patiently for the arrival of her breakfast.

It came at last, coffee, egg and roll. After a hearty meal she requested to be shown into a room; then she attended to her toilet, washing her hands and face, and arranging her hair neatly, providing herself also with clean cuffs and handkerchief from the parcel she carried.

Very neat and very respectable and very cleanly did Mrs. Wilcox appear, in a dark lavender dress, her black shawl and her small bonnet. Her sandy-coloured chignon was very smooth and neat. She kept her veil down, she stepped along daintily, she smiled complacently.

Mrs. Wilcox went and looked through the window of a jeweller's shop—there was surely nothing extraordinary in that. Brilliant rings, sparkling necklaces, heavy chains and richly-chased watches have always great charms in the eyes of the fair sex.

Mrs. Wilcox, regarding these glittering treasures, smiled her complacent smile, but made no effort to enter the shop; and then she cast a quick glance from her lynx eyes over her left shoulder; and suddenly they encountered the man with the thick hair and moustache whom we know so well.

Not that Mrs. Wilcox recognized him, but there was something in his eye which made her start, and alter her resolution.

Was she watched? Perhaps she was. Certainly every pawnbroker's and every jeweller's shop in London had received information regarding the lost jewels, and the proprietor of each establishment had received a warning and a full description of the flashing gems.

Perhaps it would be too bold a stroke even for such a saint-like dame as Mrs. Wilcox to offer them for sale in London.

Finally she resolved not to do so. No, she would go to the Continent, and there she could safely dispose of her treasures.

Mrs. Wilcox was very suspicious, very cautious. She smiled, absolutely smiled at the man in the black moustache. She did not recognize him; but she mistrusted him; so she smiled at him, and walked away. She returned to her inn, made arrangements to sleep there that night, then went down to the railway station and inquired the price of a through ticket to Cologne via Ostend.

Very carefully was Mrs. Wilcox watched all through that day. But somehow or other her trace

was lost during the night when she departed by the Dover mail train.

She had managed things very cleverly—so cleverly that it was impossible, so far, to bring a single charge against her.

He who had watched her so anxiously was compelled to return to Northwick St. John's, having discovered nothing.

It was a bright moonlight night of June when Paul Clement, now undisguised, walked up St. Peter's Street and knocked at the door of Doctor Dalby.

It was opened by the doctor himself.

How thin and worn and aged the good man looked!

"Any news, Clement, any news?" he demanded in a hoarse whisper.

"None, sir, none," replied Paul, gloomily.

The doctor closed the hall-door softly, and then led the way to the surgery; there he pointed to a seat.

"Sit down, Paul, sit down," he said.

And then he stood before him, looking hungry for news. His white hair was tossed wildly about his brow, his eyes were hollow, his hands were extended in an imploring attitude.

"You suspect that woman, that female fiend," he continued, presently, "and so do I—it must be instinct. Tell me, then, you suspected she was going to London; and she has been away?"

"She is away still," returned Paul, gloomily.

"Well, tell me what happened."

"I followed her when she left this house," said Paul, "and saw her enter her own; then she came to her top window, and drew down the blind. Some instinct told me she was going a journey that night. I returned home and disguised myself. I changed my clothes in the little wood-house at the bottom of the kitchen garden, and I passed out quite safely without being seen. Then I went and watched her house until a quarter to eleven, at which time she emerged from it, locking the door behind her. She took her way straight to the station, and I followed. She took her ticket for London, so did I—and entered the same carriage with her. I was with her in the same omnibus. I followed her when she entered an inn, and I heard her order her breakfast."

"And what followed?" cried the doctor, eagerly.

"I did not like to intrude myself on her notice in such a manner. So I watched until she left the house again. Neat she was then, and clean, the dirt and smoke of the journey washed off her cunning face. Her chignon was smooth, her cuffs were spotless, her clothes were well brushed. She walked along simpering, much in the mincing style which she affects here. All at once she stopped. It was opposite a jeweller's, one of the greatest in the city. She approached the window and looked in—so did I. Suddenly she turned round, and stared me full in the face. She did not recognize me—of that I am confident—but she suspected me. She did not enter the shop, she altered her mind and returned to the inn. She came out again and went to the station. I imagined she was thinking of going to some other large town. She was too quick for me. She had only made inquiries, she came out again smiling, and returned to her inn once more. I watched the inn that night until the shops were shut. By that time, I regret to say—I acknowledge with shame, that an intense fatigue came over me. You know I have been studying very much lately. I felt very faint and ill. I went to an hotel that I might refresh myself by washing, and afterwards partaking of some supper. I had but little appetite. I was thoroughly worn out, and fell asleep at length with my elbows on the table, my head resting on my arms. When I woke it was very late, the gas was nearly all turned off, the house was closed for the night. One waiter was there, who had sat up for me, and who, being a timid and retiring sort of person, had not dared to disturb me. He told me now it was one o'clock, and asked if I would like to be shown to my room. I answered eagerly No, I wished to go out. I went out then, and again I watched the inn of Mrs. Wilcox. At last I crossed over, rang the people up, and asked to be accommodated there for the night. I was admitted. Then I began to inquire about the lady in the black shawl. She had gone away at eleven o'clock that night, nobody knew whither, but it was supposed by the London, Chatham and Dover line, since she had made inquiries about the Ostend boat."

The doctor stamped his feet and tore his white hair.

"Then you never put a detective to watch—to watch day and night incessantly?" he cried.

"I had resolved to do it myself," returned Paul.

"And fell asleep at your post," groaned the doctor.

"I must have been mad," said Paul, speaking between his set teeth. "I had not slept for two nights before leaving Northwick St. John's. I had spent all that time in pacing up and down my room, laying plans. And when I left watching the inn I did not

intend to be away for more than an hour. The shops were shut, so that the woman could not have gone out again to offer the jewels for sale."

"I believe I am too hard upon you, Paul, my boy," said the doctor, grasping his hand. "Perhaps we do wrong to suspect this woman. We have not a shadow of ground to go on. If you had arrested her, or molested her in any way, you might have laid yourself open to action for heavy damages."

"But I have left the detective strict orders to watch for her return, and when she arrives here her every action will be scanned."

"She will probably never arrive here," said the doctor. "If she were really privy to the murder of my child, she will probably sell the jewels and live on the proceeds somewhere abroad under a feigned name."

They discussed the painful subject for hours.

In the morning Paul resumed his usual dress and habits, studies and duties, and the household dropped into its usual routine.

"Where is your friend, Mrs. Wilcox?" asked the doctor, suddenly, of his wife, just as they were about to sit down to dinner.

The amiable lady had now been absent from Northwick St. John's four days.

"I heard this morning," replied the doctor's wife, "that she had suddenly been called to London to attend the death-bed of a rich relative from whom she has expectations."

A gleam of satisfaction for an instant shot from the doctor's eyes.

"She will come back rich then?" he said, rubbing his hands.

"Poor thing, she deserves it," cried Mrs. Dalby. "If she comes into a fortune depend upon it she will use it well."

"Excellent creature," said the doctor.

"You were always sarcastic towards my poor friend," cried Mrs. Dalby, with a sigh.

The doctor did not answer.

Six weeks passed away, and no news came of Diana. Mrs. Wilcox did not return.

At the end of that time the doctor, coming in suddenly one afternoon to the pretty little parlour which overlooked the flower garden, discovered his wife seated at tea with Mrs. Wilcox. Delicate bread and butter, a fanciful basket filled with the richest cherries, a delicate seed cake, cream, sugar, strong tea, pretty teacups, open window, summer air, blooming flowers, were all there.

Mrs. Wilcox was more elegantly costumed than was her wont, wearing a black silk skirt, a white muslin jacket, a gold brooch, a gold chain, a new chignon of richly-plaited, reddish hair—Mrs. Wilcox rose up and extended her hand to meet that of the doctor.

"How well you are looking, doctor!" she said.

"How well you are looking, madam!" he returned.

"Such good news, doctor," cried Mrs. Dalby. "Mrs. Wilcox's cousin has left her seven thousand pounds, and she is going to purchase a pretty little estate down in Devon."

The doctor elevated his eyebrows.

"It is too bad of you, I think," he said, "now that you have come into your fortune, that you should go away to spend it. You see, if you were to have a long illness you might put a twenty-pound note in my pocket."

Mrs. Wilcox simpered.

"I shall always retain," she said, "an affectionate remembrance of Northwick St. John's. I have suffered here considerably. Many who have opened their doors to me as a humble friend have not considered me all the while on an equal footing, and have never introduced me to their great acquaintances."

"Hallo!" thought the doctor, "here's a rub for never having asked her to dinner."

"I have suffered here," continued Mrs. Wilcox, "but then I have done my duty to others. I have had here a sphere of usefulness. I have been a blessing to many. I have endeavoured to teach the poor their duty, and I trust I have been of much benefit to them. But a wider sphere of usefulness awaits me in the Devonshire village to which I am about to retire. And with me duty is ever paramount to inclination."

"I wish we were all like you," cried poor Mrs. Dalby. "Oh, if I were only half as good!"

"That's impossible," cried the doctor, grimly. "None of us can ever come up to half the perfection of a character like Mrs. Wilcox."

Mrs. Wilcox simpered.

"You are always so sarcastic, doctor," she said.

"Not at all," he answered. "It is your modesty, Mrs. Wilcox, which causes you to misinterpret my admiration. Pray allow me the felicity of helping you to some more cherries."

It was so very seldom that the doctor had ever talked to Mrs. Wilcox at all before the time of Diana's disappearance, and when he had spoken his words had been so few and his manner so rough and con-

temptuous, that now the change was something very remarkable, nor did Mrs. Wilcox appreciate it. The conduct of the doctor puzzled her; his looks and words and tones all spoke a language which she could not comprehend. Did he suspect her? If so, why? He continued to look at her, still smiling his incomprehensible smile.

"I will take a cup of your very nice tea, my dear," said he to his wife. "It is very seldom that I indulge in this fashionable luxury before dinner, but now the pleasure of enjoying Mrs. Wilcox's society is so inviting that I cannot resist the temptation."

What was the matter with the doctor? How his eyes blazed, how pale he was, how his voice and his hands shook! Had Mrs. Dalby been a blooming bride and he a young husband, had Mrs. Wilcox been a fascinating widow of one-and-twenty, youthful relic of some rich old husband who had left her with a great fortune; had she been beautiful, piquante and graceful, instead of lean, bony, angular, with a wizened, cunning face that had come into existence nearly fifty years before; had, we say, the conditions of these people been changed, had they all been thirty years younger and filled with thoughts of love and romance instead of being imbued with ideas appertaining to care, business, and all those worldly considerations which form the very atmosphere of middle age, then it might have been possible that the doctor had conceived a sudden and violent passion for his wife's friend. His eyes were always fixed upon her. He addressed no one but her.

Very uncomfortable did Mrs. Wilcox feel. She giggled and she simpered, and cried:

"Oh, doctor, how sarcastic you are!"

Poor Mrs. Dalby knew not what to make of the whole matter. It was "very extraordinary," she thought, and she knew enough of her husband to be aware that he was agitated by some very deep considerations, and after awhile Mrs. Wilcox arose and put on a bonnet of dove-coloured satin and lace, and a black gauze shawl trimmed with lavender satin. Very elegant half-mourning, was hers, for a middle-aged lady.

The doctor still watched her very narrowly.

"You do not put on crapes and weepers, and ink cloaks, as Shakespeare calls them, in order that you may demonstrate your grief to the world. The stream runs more deeply, I suppose, than to need all those 'trappings and suits of woe' to testify to its existence. A perennial fountain of tears doubtless springs ever in your soul, but you do not allow the lustre of your eyes to be dimmed by those pearly drops. I am sure that you are mourning deeply for the death of the relation who has left you seven thousand pounds. Allow me to help you on with your shawl."

Mrs. Wilcox shook her friend by the hand, but when her own was once imprisoned within the grasp of the doctor she positively feared for one nervous moment that she should never free it again, he clutched it so convulsively.

"Good evening, dear madam," he said, "good evening. It would be mockery for me to wish you pleasant dreams and sweet repose. The pillows of saints like yourself must be visited by angel messengers, and heavenly visions must exalt your slumbering soul."

Mrs. Wilcox giggled again, and took her departure in a great hurry.

"What can he mean? What can he mean?" said the lady to herself. "I wonder if I have done wrong in returning here; and yet if I had never come back would it not have looked most suspicious? Certainly it would. I shall continue to tell my story of my cousin and of my seven thousand pounds. Little do the simpletons here know or think that I have in reality thirty thousand pounds. I shall continue to talk of the estate in Devonshire, but I shall write to Mrs. Dalby and tell her that I have been disappointed in regard to the title-deeds of the estate, and that, more than that, I consider that my mission lies elsewhere, that it is my duty to go out to India and teach the heathen; in fact, that I am about to become a female missionary. Then I shall escape to the Continent, and I shall live under a feigned name at Florence, Genoa, or Nice. I will see the world. I will state that my name is Madame Hausmann. My bright days are coming to me now, I believe. Meanwhile I must set about to get rid of my house and furniture. I must pay six months' rent for my house, for I have not given notice. Never mind, it is only ten pounds. And then I must call in a broker to take my furniture. Probably I shall not get twenty pounds for it. But that matters not. And now I must go to Dighting's this very evening. She whom I dread is there. She is savage and stupid and ferocious, she is greedy, she is full of anxiety now to know if I have sold the jewels and for how much, and I must make up my mind to the fact that she will levy heavy demands, that she will ask me for

as much money again as I have already given her. Well, I would not grudge three hundred pounds to buy her silence."

So thought generous Mrs. Wilcox, who had made thirty thousand pounds out of their mutual crime. She went home and changed her gay attire for humble raiment. Her little servant had been dismissed long ago. As for the thirty thousand pounds, it was all contained in Bank of England notes and gold in a flat tin box sewed up in flannel and placed under various sheets, blankets and counterpanes at the bottom of Mrs. Wilcox's iron chest. This chest she locked up and took the key with her as usual.

The delightful fragrance of the summer evening was about her path as she took her way towards Dighting's. Twilight was fast giving place to the splendour of night. The moon was rising over the quaint old town of Northwick St. John's. Its silver radiance shone upon the church tower, gilded the bridge, shimmered like spirit-light upon the roofs of the houses. Mrs. Wilcox turned her head once to look at the quiet town, the brilliant moon, the purple sky. Then she hastened on between the fragrant, flowering hedgerows; and after a while Dighting's Farm came into sight. She turned down the fields, and presently she stood under the honeysuckle-grown porch. The door was open, and in the stone passage stood the figure of a woman. She came forward, and the moonbeams shone upon the coarse face of Mrs. Childerstone. Neatly dressed she was in black, with a white collar and a white and black cap, a jet brooch and jet earrings. A respectable woman she looked, if one could have forgotten her villainous face and its savage expression.

"You are come, then," she said. "I thought you was grown too fine a lady to come near me."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Wilcox, "don't speak so loud."

Mrs. Childerstone answered her by a hideous chuckle.

"There ain't nobody to hear us," she said. "The little nuss is in bed and asleep; I have sent the gal home for a holiday to see her grandmother; no fear of her coming till to-morrow; all the farm men are gone home, 'cept old Joseph, and he—he's drunk. I left the key of the gin barrel in his way a-purpose, and he've tapped it many times this afternoon. He's lying on his back on the straw in the big barn, with no more sense in him than a log of wood. I have been kicking him," and she laughed brutally.

"But where's the master?" asked Mrs. Wilcox, in a whisper.

"Gone to market," responded the other woman, "and will come home now after the banks is closed, with five hundred in his pocket. This is the night I've been waiting for ever so long. I'm glad as you've come here just in the very nick of time; we'll settle 'im, and bag the five hundred. Leastways, I shall bag that for my share, for you've done much better where you've been. I believe as you've made a cool five thousand out of them things, and I means you to pay me a five hundred, so as I shall have a clear thousand extra to the hundred and eighty as you paid me. If you don't give me the five hundred, I'll peach on you."

Her utterance was rather thick, and her face was flushed, but Mrs. Childerstone and the brandy bottle were intimate acquaintances.

In the large kitchen burnt a bright little fire, and the two women established themselves before it.

"I mean to do it to-night," said Mrs. Childerstone. "I mean to have his five hundred. And now you just up and tell me whether you mean to give me another five hundred. I'll have it from you by fair means or foul—one or the other, for I know where you've been in foreign parts; you've made a fine bargain for yourself."

"You shall have the money," said Mrs. Wilcox. "Not that I have sold the jewels for the sum you suppose. I have only made fourteen hundred pounds, and if I give you five hundred I shall only have nine hundred remaining. I have already given you nearly two hundred pounds, and when you consider all the expense I've been put to, in travelling abroad, and so on, you will admit that I have not made more than six hundred by the transaction."

"I don't mind what you've made," responded the other, brutally. "I only know I'm certain of two things. One is that you are trying to deceive me, and the other is that I'll have five hundred pounds out of you before this time to-morrow night."

Mrs. Wilcox laughed nervously.

"You shall have the money," she said.

At that moment a step sounded on the gravel path outside, and immediately after entered the good farmer, ruddy, smiling, unsuspecting.

He looked kindly upon the two murderous women who were drinking his brandy by the light of his fire.

Perhaps he himself had been indulging a little too freely in that potent liquor, in company with other

farmers at the "Golden Fleece." He was not in the least tipsy, but he was exhilarated.

He advanced to the fire and sank somewhat heavily into one of the Windsor chairs.

"Taking a little refreshment, ladies, are ye?" said he, rather jocosely. "Well, there's always a welcome at Dighting's for every friend. I'll take a little myself, just a little, please, Mrs. Childerstone. A couple of table-spoonsful, dashed with cold water, and squeeze part of a lemon into it—one lump of sugar, no more."

Mrs. Childerstone arose, and gloomily prepared this cold punch in the way which the farmer liked, then she handed him the tumbler half-full. He took it, and cried out, in a jovial voice:

"Here's to your health, ladies, and second husbands to both of you."

He drank the cold punch; it refreshed him, for it was of a pleasant acid flavour, not too strong; he was weary with his walk.

Mrs. Childerstone left the kitchen. The door was ajar. The farmer was sitting with his back towards it.

Presently Mrs. Childerstone appeared again at the door—appeared that is to say to Mrs. Wilcox, who sat facing her and the farmer.

His broad back and bald head possessed no Argus eyes to watch the approach of the stately monster, who drew nearer and nearer, balancing an enormous poker in her hand.

She had taken off her slippers, and her stocking feet trod noiselessly on the floor.

Mrs. Wilcox saw death coming up behind her host in the form of that female fiend; but she cheerfully continued the light chat which flowed from her thin, parched lips.

"Cherries are wonderfully cheap in London, Mr. Hamer," she said, "positively, fine white-hearts at twopenny per pound! But, oh, the ignorance there is among the lower classes—the poor little untutored boys in the streets! I strove to be of use, even for the short time I was there. I took a district for three weeks—"

Mrs. Childerstone brandished the poker, balanced it cleverly, took deadly aim, and Mrs. Wilcox, in expectation of the impending blow, closed her eyes; then shook her head, and said, sanctimoniously:

"Ah, dear Mr. Hamer, I find my sphere of usefulness everywhere."

It was a scene worthy of the pencil of a Hogarth!

CHAPTER XXXII.

Pictured pride looked down from the wall,
Baron and knight and lady and all,
And from gilded frame both lord and dame
Shone forth in satin, and each proud name
Was in gold at the foot. "The Pictures."

JOSEPHINE followed Miss Woodville through that splendid mansion, where her Grandmother Constance had passed the most momentous months of her life.

Tempestcloud Castle was a splendid residence, but it was adorned more in that Russian style of magnificence which depends on glitter, gems, gold and gorgeousness for effect.

The wealth of the owner of Stonleigh Priory was vast, vaster probably than that of Lady Vengea. But there was not so much show of more expensive magnificence in the noble old county mansion. Numbers of the rooms were panelled with oak carving, the curtains which shaded the windows in these apartments were sometimes of dark purple silk, sometimes of crimson—always of rich colours, though never gay or bright.

Family portraits were painted, here and there, the ceilings were of oak, richly carved in panels with a medallion of white in the centre, painted by the hand of some gifted artist, to represent a scene classic or otherwise.

The furniture in the suite of sombre-splendid apartments was all of priceless carved oak; the couches and chairs were covered with rich dark silks, whose hues harmonized with the tints of the curtains. This suite was called the oaken suite. There was, first of all, a library, where one half of the wall was monopolized by an oaken bookcase, where the books reached from floor to ceiling, and were all bound in morocco leather, purple and gold. The curtains, couches, chairs and carpet matched the colour of the bindings. The same purple and amber tints were everywhere.

Then there was a dining-room, where the oaken carvings were relieved by crimson hangings and couches, and where the great sideboard was loaded with dishes and cups of silver and gold.

The drawing-room was a little brighter than the other rooms, being furnished in green satin; every portion of the walls and solid furniture were heavy and sombre with oak carving.

The heiress led the way into a picture gallery. A narrow strip of crimson carpet was on the polished oak floor. The Woodvilles of centuries gazed out of their richly-gilded frames upon Elfrida and Josephine as they paced this gallery.

There was a malignant scowl upon the brow of Miss Woodville, there was a bitter smile upon her lip, when she entered this place, where, as it were, the ghosts of her proud ancestors looked down upon her from the walls, and Josephine thought within herself that by right her Grandmother Constance should have had a place there among those proud beauties, in their blue or rose-coloured bodices, their heavy pearl ornaments, their court trains looped up with jewels.

Constance had married a baronet of that great house. She had been the rightful mistress of that stately Priory. She had possessed every true claim to honour, to the homage of that world which bows down to wealth and rank; and yet how had she been requited for all the faithful love she had borne her faithless husband?

Her claims had been hidden out of sight—her marriage certificate destroyed in the burning of the church. The duplicate which would have been as useful and have answered all purposes had been wickedly and cruelly concealed. After the death of her husband she had been driven out into the snow, shelterless and just when she was near to the time of giving birth to a child, who was the rightful heiress to the Priory and to the lands appertaining thereto.

And now she (Josephine), direct descendant from Constance and the baronet (Sir Miles) would positively take the place of the proud hunchback heiress if only that certificate could be found!

But there was no picture of Constance in all that long gallery.

Miss Woodville pointed now to one portrait and then to another. Here was a knight who had fought in the Crusades—here was a lady who had married afterwards into the royal family of Spain. Some of the Miss Woodvilles had been beautiful, but there were a few in whose countenances Josephine recognised the ugly scowl, the coarse features, and even the squint which disfigured Elfrida. Beautiful dames there were of other noble houses who had married and become Woodvilles, and so found a place on the walls of that picture gallery in the stately Priory.

"And my grandmother, Constance, is not here," thought Josephine; and then she wondered within herself deeply whether indeed the fierce, terrible, half-insane Lady Vengea and her grandmother, Constance, were one and the same person. Something told her that it was.

Suddenly Elfrida began to speak. She had been silent for the last seven or eight minutes.

"The people," she said, contemptuously emphasizing the words, "the people, Miss Beauvilliers, cannot comprehend the sentiments with which we of the aristocracy walk through a gallery dedicated to the shades of our ancestors. We feel the stirring of noble blood in our veins when we look upon the pictured representations of those who have always been elevated, always aristocratic, who have ever seen the crowd grovelling at their feet. Nothing annoys us—us of the aristocracy—more than when we see one of the lower ranks—one rightly belonging to the class which the French call the *canaille*—striving to ally himself or herself with the noble class above them. Such attempts always end in miserable failure. There was an ancestor of Sir Miles Woodville, a cousin of my father's, regarding whom a scandal was originated by a shameless girl, called Constance Wyatt. She came here as humble companion to Miss Woodville, a lady who still resides here, whom I call my aunt. Sir Miles, her brother, was killed while hunting, and then this Constance set up a claim—such an absurd claim—ha, ha, ha! She said that she had married Sir Miles, but she took care to name as the place where the marriage transpired a church which had been burnt down, a clergyman who had died of apoplexy as the performer of the ceremony, and a clerk who was deaf, aged, and stupid as the witness. She said the certificate had been burnt with the church, and more than this, she stated that her husband, as she called him—Sir Miles, the baronet—had hidden the duplicate somewhere in the Priory. When Miss Woodville and her mother heard of this impudent claim they acted like Spartan women. They became merciless as the aristocratic French dames were before the days of the horrible Revolution. They did what they had a right to do—what I myself would have done, and would do now under the like circumstances."

The squinting eyes of Elfrida blazed with a murderous hate.

"They turned her out at night into the snow. She found her way down to the village, and she gave birth to a child, whom she had afterwards the insolence to call the heiress of Stoneleigh Priory. Nay, she said that the child was the rightful owner, and when

Sir Mark, my father, came to take possession of his cousin's property she actually called him a usurper. Afterwards I believe the woman went mad. She took the child away, and every now and then the insolent creature has apprized our family of her movements. The daughter grew up, married against the consent of her mother—gave birth to a child, a daughter. Of all these interesting facts my own father, Sir Mark, was made cognisant by the mad woman. Her daughter died, her grand-daughter began to grow up, and the old creature still writes, still points out that this grand-daughter, who has herself proved undutiful, treading in the footsteps of her mother, is notwithstanding the rightful heiress to Stoneleigh Priory."

Josephine looked at the heiress with astonishment not unmingled with terror.

Did this cruel woman know who she was, had she had such double reason to hate her, since she was the true heiress of the noble Priory and the usurper of the affections of Chatteris?

The beautiful Josephine trembled and grew pale. But a sort of courage came to her, and she demanded in a low, vehement tone:

"Miss Woodville, what became of those ladies, the mother and daughter, who turned the girl out in the snow?"

Miss Woodville's squinting eyes darted back a seathing look upon Josephine.

"What became of them?" she said, "what should become of ladies of noble birth? The elder lady sleeps in the family vault in all dignity as becomes the wife of a Woodville. The daughter (an old lady herself now) resides in the house. She occupies a suite of apartments devoted to her own use, and is possessed of an ample fortune."

"But she is crippled, is she not?" cried Josephine—"crippled, and cannot leave her chair without assistance; and the same carriage accident which crippled this lady, injured her spine, and condemned her to a life of celibacy, was the cause of the death of her mother!"

"Oh! you have heard the story then!" cried Miss Woodville. "Mine has the disadvantage of being a twice-told tale. And pray what moral do you deduce from it? Your sympathies appear to be with the mother of that child. Perhaps, too, you know where this fine grand-daughter is hiding who considers herself the true heiress of Stoneleigh Priory?"

Josephine looked on the ground in confusion. Did Miss Woodville know, or did she not, that she, Josephine, was the true heiress, who could not establish a claim?

"Do you know where this fine heiress is?" demanded Miss Woodville, mockingly.

Josephine, looking up, saw such a diabolical gleam in the eye of Elfrida that she began to wish herself safe out of the Priory, beyond the reach of her malice.

She felt convinced now that she had only been sent for that Miss Woodville might have her in her power, and might wreak her vengeance on her.

"Miss Woodville," she said, "you know all; and I think, under the circumstances, that the sooner I leave the Priory the better for us both. It is impossible that you should regard me with any other feelings than those of suspicion, dislike, disgust. And yet, madam, you have no reason to suppose that it would be ever my policy to attempt to disturb or annoy you in any way. What could I do? The church and the certificate are burnt, and the clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony has been dead these forty years. The duplicate certificate will never be found. Doubtless it has been destroyed long ago—perhaps by Sir Miles himself. I entertain not a hope—not a shadow of a hope—that it will ever be found. Consequently, madam, fear nothing from me. Let me go in peace. It is not those who conquer who should hate the conquered. You, madam, stand here to-day rich, triumphant, enjoying all the honour which the world can shower on you. I am penniless, dependent, forced to seek for a situation in which I can earn my bread. I lay no claims to heirship; and the very connection of my name with that of your noble house only suffices to cover me with ignominy, ridicule and contempt. No, madam, you have no reason to hate me. Victors should not hate the vanquished. The conqueror, if he is noble, will not put his heel on the neck of the fallen."

Josephine spoke with an eloquence and dignity which made her beauty superb.

In her plain travelling-dress she might have passed for a young queen—towering as she did so much above the short, squat figure of the heiress.

Miss Woodville was certainly amazed at the self-possession, the loftiness of Josephine; but yet the hatred did not die out of her eye—on the contrary it increased.

"I am glad," she said, "Miss Beauvilliers," and she laughed a short laugh, "that you see that you are conquered—that you acknowledge that you have no

claim, and that, in short, you take a right view of the case. As for leaving Stoneleigh Priory, pray do not be in a hurry. A girl in your position"—she laughed again bitterly—"will find it very difficult to obtain a situation, therefore remain here, so that you may carry with you a recommendation. And now, if you are not too tired, I shall be pleased if you will enter upon some of your duties at once. It is now just six months since my poor father was burnt to death at that terrible Grandmother Grant's ball. We have never entertained anybody since; but there are just fifty people whom we wish to invite to a quiet dinner; and if you would write the invitations, I should be very much obliged to you."

Miss Woodville then led the way through the galleries to a pleasant parlour, furnished in cedar wood, and light-blue silk.

In this room Miss Woodville transacted her business, received heavy rents of her great estates from her agent, and discussed with him her plans for the improvement of those estates. Here also she wrote her letters of invitation and business. There was a large window which commanded a view of a retired part of the garden grown thickly with rose bushes—covered now with flowers—and under the shade of a large acacia tree was a sparkling fountain, the plashing sound of whose waters made a melody which mingled with the rustling of the foliage. On the inlaid table in the room was a large desk, an enamelled inkstand, a penholder of silver and mother-of-pearl, some gold-tipped pens, and about a hundred envelopes, and as many sheets of elegant fancy note paper.

"Now you will find the names, the addresses, all written on that card," said Miss Woodville. "And here, on this sheet of paper, is the form of the note which you are to write. The dinner is for next Wednesday fortnight. Please to sit down and write the notes as neatly and as quickly as you can. It is now four o'clock."

The heiress drew out her splendid watch, sparkling with diamonds.

"It will probably take you two hours to write the notes of invitation. I am going to Northwick St. John's and shall return at six, dress for dinner, and dine at seven. At six will you ring this bell? My maid will come to you and will show you to my room, where you can change your own dress for dinner. You have another dress, I suppose?" added the heiress, insolently.

"Yes, madam," replied Josephine, "one plain evening dress. But my wardrobe does not entitle me to sit down at meals with you and your friends. I can dine alone."

"Nay," cried the heiress, bitterly, "plain clothing becomes your station. Would that I could impress upon the lower classes the suitableness of plain attire."

Then the heiress walked away and Josephine sat down to her task. The heiress had not once asked her to partake of any refreshment, and she had eaten nothing since she left the Rye House in the morning. Faint and weary she grew over her task, but she persevered. It was just two hours before she had completed it. It was now six o'clock, and the heat of the sun was beginning to decline. Josephine walked to the window, and looked towards the fountain. Her heart beat fast when she perceived Chatteris lounging on the grass beside it.

Terrace steps led down from her window to the garden. In less time than it takes to write the words Chatteris had recognised her, crossed the garden, mounted the steps, and now stood by her side.

"Do not be alarmed," said he, "Elfrida has not returned. She does not expect me until to-morrow, and she has just sent a note here to say that in Northwick St. John's she met a Mrs. Colonel Jenkinson, and she has gone to Moor Park to dinner. She will not return until to-morrow. Her own carriage has just arrived here empty. Come round into the cool of the shrubbery with me, Josephine. I see you are fatigued, and it will refresh you."

Josephine hesitated.

(To be continued.)

CALIFORNIA has two million acres of land sown to wheat this season, and her statisticians think the State will produce not less than forty million bushels of wheat.

THE freehold site of the church of St. Martin, Outwich, at the corner of Threadneedle and Bishopsgate-streets, opposite the National Provincial Bank of England and the Baltic, having a superficial area of 2,210 feet, recently for sale by tender by Messrs. Fuller, Horsey, Son, and Co., has been disposed of for 32,050*l.*, or at the rate of 14*l.* 10*s.* per square foot.

WHILE everybody in England is commenting upon the polite barbarity which characterized the recent meeting of Prince Metternich and the Count de

Montebello, at St. Cloud, it seems incredible that there should be still a member of the English House of Commons who found it necessary in his time to "go out" with a newspaper editor. Yet it is not forty years since Mr. Roebuck twice exchanged shots with Mr. Black, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. When this encounter took place, on the 19th of November, 1835, Mr. Roebuck was in his thirty-second year, barrister, and member of the Northern circuit, and sat in Parliament for Bath.

FATE AND FORTUNE.

My father was a lawyer of the old school. He was shy, refined, delicate and extremely sensitive. My mother died in their early married life, and my aunt, who was two years older than my father, and who had been a governess for twelve years in one of the first families, came to keep house for him. He withdrew from society, having a small regular income, read and wrote and assisted in educating his two children.

I was eighteen when Aunt Rachel died, then I took charge of the housekeeping department; but at the time of which I am writing I was twenty-six, and May, my sister, two years younger.

Papa had been dead two years. Aunt Rachel had left May the sum of four hundred pounds, so invested that it paid ten per cent.; papa had saved a very little, and we had an old-fashioned house with about ten acres of ground.

We had been used to gentle pinches and small economies all our lives. The cessation of papa's income did make a great difference to us, but we had managed for the two years. We had never gone into much society, and probably might have grown old and gray in our solitude, but that one day a bomb-shell was thrown into our peaceful camp.

I will not stop to detail all the particulars. This property had come into papa's hands through the death or disappearance of the real owner. Papa, I know, considered Stanham Palmer dead. Not a question had been raised, not an inquiry brought about, until we were one day surprised by a visit from a lawyer acting for Mrs. Stanham Palmer and her son. Their proofs were beyond question. In an hour May and I were overwhelmed.

"To be homeless and well nigh penniless! What can we do?" asked May, in affright. "I have sometimes wished that we could know a little more of the outside world, but to be thrust upon it—unprepared!"

"It is like a horrible dream," and I shivered. "Perhaps it may not be true."

"Oh, Anstice, it surely is. And Mrs. Palmer and her son are coming down next week. We shall have to go—but where?"

Our helplessness all came out then.

We had never depended upon ourselves for a more serious undertaking than a bargain of a few pounds, or the preparation of a meal. And we had never been farther than twenty miles or thereabouts from our home in all our lives.

"Had we better go away before they come?" asked May, in a tone of fearful indecision.

"Why, no, it would hardly be polite. And there is the packing. And, as you said—where shall we go?"

"It is cruel."

And May began to sob.

I cried a little too, and considered.

"We might be governesses. Aunt Rachel always thought it genteel. We shall have to do something."

"I might teach music and drawing to the children who had a natural aptitude. But stupid or unruly pupils would kill me."

I hardly doubted it.

We were both slender and fragile-looking, rather tall, fair, but my eyes were a deep gray, while May's were blue; and my hair was a soft, pale-brown while hers had golden tints. We were not handsome, but neither were we specially plain. Our great trouble was that we knew so little of the world and our own capabilities.

However, we began to pack up immediately—clothes, ornaments and trinkets, articles that had been papa's or Aunt Rachel's, or that we had accumulated.

The heavy furniture was in the house when we came, so we had no right to disturb that. Every evening we discussed projects.

Mrs. Palmer and her son came down upon us. She might have been forty years old, a stout, florid, black-eyed, loud-voiced woman, innately vulgar, yet shrewd and business-like. She went over the business matters with astonishing volubility. She explored every corner, every article, and when she found that the furniture went with the house would have claimed everything else.

The son was short and stout, addicted to sleeping late in the morning and an unlimited quantity of cigars.

In three days he began to make desperate love to May, who, to shield herself from his importunities, threatened to tell his mother.

We had some kind friends, who offered us a shelter, but we decided that we might as well try the world at once.

Indeed, James Palmer's love-making seemed to infuse new spirit into May, and she was anxious to be gone out of the neighbourhood. We sent our bulkiest belongings to a friend, to be kept for us, and, with two trunks, went to a prosperous manufacturing town.

Once settled in a pleasant, sunny room, we began to consider in good earnest what we should do. Governessing we soon found was difficult and undesirable, and would surely separate us.

Teaching—but, alas! when it came to that, our training had not been of the right kind. We knew little of a great many things, enough to appreciate and to talk about them, but not enough for a rigid examination.

Times had changed since my father and Aunt Rachel were young. Mothers wanted their daughters taught more branches in a year than we had spent ten in acquiring. And then we had no modern style.

We could not do dressmaking; we were strangers to machine sewing. There was work in a factory, but we shrank from that. I almost concluded at last that we were helpless gentlewomen.

But the small amount of money that papa had left us was fast melting away. Boarding was expensive, so, meeting with three rooms on the second-floor of a tidy-looking house, we rented them, and sent for our odds and ends.

"My forty pounds will pay our rent and provide fuel, but what are we to live upon?" said May.

"Something must come," I replied, desperately.

"What a strange life ours has been, Anstice. We have seen nothing of the world; we have little practical knowledge; I am past twenty-four, and we have neither of us had—a lover!"

May's face was one crimson flush.

"What, yes—there was James Palmer."

"That!"

She made a gesture of disdain.

"Are you anxious for a lover, May?" I asked, gravely.

"Well—no—not exactly. Many women do marry, though, Anstice, and for both of us to stay single—"

"But if we are compelled to, it will not be our fault," I said, with a good-natured laugh.

"No," in a strange, soft tone. "Anstice, don't you think there is a peculiar influence in the rush and hurry of the world? I could have been content to go on the same all my life at home, but now I want something—I don't know what. The days appear so long and uneventful. There seems so much outside. Why, I have almost begun to envy the factory girls who go tripping by to their meals."

"But you couldn't May—"

My pride was roused. A factory girl! What would papa say?

"No, I don't suppose I could. The noise and smell and coarse gossip and untidiness would jar on my nerves and fret me; but sometimes, Anstice, I wish we had not been brought up quite so nicely."

We put a modest advertisement in the paper:

"A lady of refinement and culture would like pupils in drawing and music, the lessons to be given at the pupils' homes."

Nothing came of it. We dawdled over our small store of housework and sewing, read and re-read, and then proposed that we should study systematically.

"Listen to this," exclaimed May, one morning.

"Wanted, a good soprano singer; one who can read music at sight. I can sing. We never thought of that."

"If it is in a church," I interposed, rather doubtfully.

"I mean to apply, anyhow. It will be a change to our monotonous days. Any event is welcome."

"Shall I go with you?" for she began to make herself ready.

"As you like. Nothing can hurt me in broad daylight, you know."

I felt that she would rather dare her fate alone, and said no more.

She looked peculiarly elegant and ladylike in her gray dress with its pipings of black, and her black straw hat, with a little quilling of pale blue under the rim. Her gloves fitted to a charm. Indeed, she had peculiar hands; not so very small, but faultless in shape.

I sewed for an hour quite tranquilly, thinking of her and the future, and half-wishing that I had not let her go alone. And yet she was no child.

The next half-hour seemed intolerable; then the door was flung open, and she entered, looking fairly radiant.

She threw off her hat, and dropped on the stool at my feet, laying her arms in my lap.

"I have had a positive adventure, Anne, and—I don't know whether you will like it, but I've promised to try—"

"It is not in a church?" I said, intuitively.

"No. Let me tell you. My heart almost failed me when I got to the house. I rapped several times before I could make any one hear; but presently a lady answered, and I was ushered into a room. Explaining my errand, she then conducted me to an ante-room, and said, 'Mr. Sage, here is another soprano.' A tall, good-looking gentleman rose and bowed, then went on talking with a lady. It was some time before he was at leisure to attend to me, and then I learned that he was preparing a troupe of singers to travel in different cities, in costumes of a hundred or so years old, and give concerts. I said that I was not sure that I should like to go away. Presently he asked me to sing. I think they were all pleased with my voice. Then a lady, Mrs. Carew, a cousin of Mr. Sage, begged me to try on some costumes. She dressed me, and rearranged my hair, and—oh, Anne! you wouldn't have known me at all. I don't wonder that our grandmothers were so handsome," and May flushed a pretty, delicate pink, her own true colour.

"And you promised?" I said, amazed.

"No. But they want me so much. And Mrs. Carew says it may be a stepping-stone to something higher. First they offered me three pounds a week—all one's expenses are paid, you know—then Mr. Sage said he would give fifteen pounds a month, and I might try it for three months. I shouldn't have to buy any costumes. There are those old brocades and laces of grandmothers."

Her eyes sparkled, her face was full of light and vivacity, and her very voice had a beguiling tone in it. I sighed.

"Oh, Anstice, I won't go if you don't like it. And I should be sorry to leave you alone, but it is only for three months, and think of the remuneration! Why, that with my money would almost keep us the whole year, our habits are so inexpensive."

"You will do all," I said, almost gloomily. "And I am the elder. May, something might happen to you."

"Nonsense! I suppose we seem more children to each other, but Mrs. Carew isn't over thirty, I know, and she has been away several times with an opera-troupe. She went on the stage at sixteen."

"Perhaps something else may come."

"Well," she returned, "now it is time to get dinner. Oh, Mr. Sage is to call here this evening. I told him we had some old costumes."

After dinner we sewed silently. I went over my own resources again. What could I do?

There was one little gift, drawing—designing, I have learned to call it since; but I could think of no way of making it available then except teaching children.

I had inquired at two seminaries in the town, but received no encouragement.

In my desperation that afternoon I even thought of applying to the dressmaker in the street below, that I might be taught her art. I was a neat but not a rapid sewer. It took me a long while to plan and arrange. I could hardly hope to excel, but I might earn a living.

I would not be dependent on May, that I resolved.

Mr. Sage came, according to appointment. He was forty or thereabout, with a pleasant face and a pleasant voice; no ogre—not a deceitful line in his face, and he talked business in a straightforward way.

I could see that he and his cousin had resolved to add May to their company. It would be very select, only twenty performers. Mrs. Carew had a wide experience, and would matronize the party.

If Miss Palmer was not satisfied after a trial of one month, he would cancel her engagement, and allow her to return.

May brought forth our store of old dresses.

A pale fawn-coloured satin, scant, short, with tiny waist and sleeves and black lace trimmings, with its gauze scarf to match, and slippers with great silver buckles; then a heavy brocade, whose pale-green ground was covered with bright vines, puffed, bunched and trimmed, the Dolly Varden of a long past period.

"I should like to see you in this, Miss Palmer," Mr. Sage said. "Could you oblige me?"

May disappeared in the adjoining apartment.

While she was dressing Mr. Sage explained his purpose to me.

The winter before he had given a concert or two with singers dressed in the old Continental costume. From that experience he thought a series of them



[MAY IN A NEW CHARACTER.]

would be very profitable. It was the beginning of what proved so attractive as Old Folks' Concerts.

May opened the door timidly, and came out.

I had never seen her dressed in any of these garments, and should not have known her.

The dress was open, with a stomacher, a wide rill around the neck, and the sleeves, which only reached to the elbow, were finished in the same manner. The skirt barely reached her ankles, and displayed the silk clocked stockings and pointed slippers with their high heels. She had fastened a high shell comb with a knot of scarlet streamers in her hair; in one hand she held a snuff-box, and in the other an enormous fan.

"Capital! capital! Why, Miss Palmer, I have indeed discovered a treasure. You might have just stepped out of a court scene. I wonder—why, you have the make-up of an actress!"

"I feel as if I could act," she declared, with a strange gaiety.

"I think in years to come you will be glad that you made this venture. I predict a brilliant future for you."

I shivered.

We had not been religiously brought up, or at least not puritanically, and were fond of reading plays, but the idea of being an actress shocked me unexpressibly.

Not so May.

She flitted her fan, minced along on her small high heels, tossed her head, and gave an arch little laugh.

"If you could have seen her this morning, Miss Palmer!" he said to me. "She was Miss Deliverance Praiseworthy, meek and prudent, and given to great soberness of conduct."

I soon decided that the tide was too strong for me to stem. May had caught at the change eagerly, more so than she thought for herself. I could not understand the sudden desire to go out of her quiet life to something that we had always considered not a very high ambition. And yet this life was very

monotonous. I seemed to have outgrown youth while she appeared to have just touched its glittering boundary. Indeed, looking at her, one would not have imagined her beyond eighteen.

"With your permission, I will bring Mrs. Carew to call upon you, Miss Palmer," Mr. Sage said, presently, when we had gone back to business. "But you must not give yourself any uneasiness about your sister. She will be well cared for."

I did not like Mrs. Carew quite as well. She appeared delighted to have May, and yet endeavoured to impress upon me that there were plenty of young ladies who would be glad of the opportunity.

"And if your sister is compelled to support herself, I am sure she cannot do it in an easier or pleasanter fashion. She really has a fortune in her voice, though she wants considerable training. But the perfect freshness is her great point at present."

It was in the middle of October, and in ten days they were to start. Now and then May's heart would misgive her concerning my loneliness, but I could see that for herself she thought it a delight.

However, at last we kissed each other, and said our final good-byes. I was very lonely. After a week or so I found it intolerable, and made application to the dressmaker in the street below, offering my services without remuneration.

She was a rather stylish yet vulgar person, though she had some aristocratic customers, and appeared to be well liked.

But I could not make myself at home.

From morning to night I listened to the rapid dribble of talk—dresses, beaux, gossip—there were four girls beside myself. And, although I did not dislike sewing, I found this was going to be exceedingly distasteful to me. I might be a success as to dress, but I never should as to customers. I had not the flattering, plausible manner that wins.

The only comfort of my life was May's bright chatty letters. She sent me, too, many delightful notices of herself. Deliverance Praiseworthy seemed

to be the star of the troupe. And then she was seeing so much of the world—strange cities, new people, everything to enchant. If I could only be with her! She wished that I would take board somewhere, and be less lonesome. And she sent me the entire cheque for her first month. Her tenderness touched me deeply.

My two months having expired, I consulted with the lady living downstairs, with whom I had become quite friendly.

She promised to do whatever she could for me. If I could be established in something by the time May came back, I should be able to make a greater effort to keep her. And perhaps I should like the work better under my own management.

But I was destined to be disappointed on all sides. Mr. Sage was making his tour so profitable that he would be absent at least two months. I could not expect May home until April.

I had a modest sign put up, but no one seemed much attracted by it.

A few of Mrs. Miller's friends came in, but I found they had been used to having their dressmaking done at the cheapest rates, and sewing entirely by hand rendered such wages a mere pittance.

I had managed to live on the little that papa had left, touching neither May's interest nor her wages. I was too proud to be dependent upon her. But what could I do?

I cannot describe to you my joy on that April day when my darling returned. And yet how changed she was!—rounder, rosier, with an indescribable style and vivacity, and a demonstrativeness that affected me oddly. She talked in snatches, kissed me between every sentence, and was half-wild with delight.

"But you look pale and thin, Anne," she exclaimed, at length. "I daresay you have been worrying yourself almost to death, while I have had such a lovely time—just like a long, bright holiday! a little fatiguing in the hardest parts, but so full of interest and excitement. And I have learned so much! Why, I believe I could manage a concert troupe myself. There are so many things to tell. But first, what have you been doing, you poor old darling? Moping yourself to death, I know. I shall never leave you again, never."

"Oh, May, my precious!" and I swallowed a great sob. "How glad and thankful I am to hear you say it. We can manage, I know."

"Well, tell me what you have been doing?" She laughed over my confession, as she called it. Indeed I felt ashamed of my want of success.

"Never mind, dear, I am going to be the business woman of the family. I have so many new plans to tell you. I have had such rare, rare luck."

"Oh, May, I hoped—what would papa say to have you a stage singer?"

She coloured warmly.

"It is my one gift, Antistice, and I do not know why I should not improve it. But I am not going on the stage at present. Do you want to hear my story now or wait until we have said all our sweet and fond things?"

And she smiled.

"Let me hear it now or I shall be afraid that you will never belong to me again," I answered.

I cannot repeat it in her diffuse yet interesting manner.

There had been some jealousies and heart-burnings in the troupe. When Mr. Sage began to show a decided preference for May Mrs. Carew had grown correspondingly uncomfortable.

"You see," explained May, "she is in love with him. I don't know whether he means to marry her, but she seems to have some power over him. She need not have been afraid, however."

"And you didn't—"

"A man old enough to be my father! you foolish child. No, we were capital friends, but I never was a bit in love with him. Still, she compelled him to give me up, or would have, if I had not already made another engagement."

"Oh, May, what is it?" I asked, alarmed.

"Orthodox, respectable and highly genteel. To sing in a church."

"Oh, my darling! I have thought of that. It is just what I have wished for you. But where?"

"In a pretty suburb of a large town. I met the organist of St. James's by particular request, he having heard me sing. We gave a concert at Melton afterwards, and I sang in the church one Sunday morning. A fortnight ago he offered me the position of soprano, urged me to come, in fact, and I have promised. The salary is not very large, and I shall doubtless eke it out by concert singing. But you will like Melton and you will like Mr. Salvotti."

"Salvotti! Is he a foreigner?"

"No, I think not, though it is a foreign name. My salary will be one hundred pounds a year, and I do not commence until the first of July, but I want us to

remove as soon as we can. There is a lovely little cottage next to—not far from the church, I mean,” and she caught her breath. “Am I tiring you with my plans?”

“Oh, no. What kind of a person is this Mr. Salvotti?”

“Not much beyond thirty, and—well, I suppose medium in every respect,” answered May, giving a little laugh. “Neither handsome nor plain, nervous and intensely musical. He has been on the stage—in opera—that’s my secret, though, Anne; I think he would not like it told.”

I had a little suspicion, but I did not like to express it. I wanted to ask if he were married, but I had not the courage. She had not fallen in love with Mr. Sage, and I half-guessed that he must have had a strong liking for her, so I thought I could trust her.

It was a week or two before she told me all her experiences. In the meanwhile we planned and packed a little. Another odd offer befell us about this time. Mrs. Stanham Palmer, being much disgusted with her inheritance, proposed to sell it, and made us the first offer.

“I wouldn’t go back if she were to give it to me,” exclaimed May, decisively.

“We could not buy it anyhow,” I said, rather sadly.

“Are you hankering after it, Anne? Why, Melton would be Paradise compared with it. You can’t think how dull it would seem. But I forgot; you have not lived in such a whirl as I have. And now I mean to make you ever so happy.”

“But we were so peaceful and untroubled there.”

“A sort of negative existence. I would rather live and love and suffer than drone on in that style.” She went into a bit of Italian melody, and looked not unlike a stage queen.

Yes, she had changed greatly. She was so brisk and bright, so full of plans and expedients, and her energy roused me to new hopes. I could not advise—she knew what to do and how to do it.

By the second week of May we were in Melton, buying and furnishing. The cottage contained five rooms, and had a pretty garden. Next to us was that of Mr. Salvotti. He kept a housekeeper and gardener, who would be willing to make himself useful to us.

May had spent so little of her salary that we felt quite rich. Numerous trips to town were made for the articles we needed. We indulged ourselves in a parlor carpet, a new bedroom suite and some useful kitchen furnishings. Pictures and ornaments we had, and we both possessed the art of beautifying and adorning with our fingers.

I really could not decide whether I liked Mr. Salvotti or not. He certainly was not a foreigner. Beside his organ playing he gave lessons, was much at home, and very retiring in his ways. But I soon found out the secret. He was in love with May, and she was in love with him. I do not think she realized it in those early days; at least, she called it a friendship.

We were very happy. It was a perfect summer day. Our new acquaintances were refined and cultured people, and the little town was delightful.

What lovely long days we spent in rambling about with Mr. Salvotti as our guide.

He seemed to know everything.

He had been abroad as well, and his manners were polished and elegant, the indescribable something that comes with birth and breeding. He was a musical composer also, but what puzzled me most was the fact of his staying here in obscurity when he could have graced a much higher position, and had evidently been fitted for it.

The next winter May sang at several concerts in the city.

Mr. Salvotti was very proud of her success.

I accompanied her everywhere now—indeed, he never invited her alone. But they spent hours together in the pleasant parlour when I was busy with household cares, and had long practices in the organ gallery. What did it matter? I felt that it would end by May’s marrying him.

Another calm, restful, dreamy summer. I had been doing lessons in painting, and was becoming an artist in a small way.

Mr. Salvotti used to praise my talent for designing. Once he spoke of a friend of his who was the manager of some large print works.

“I know they employ several designers,” he said. “If you like, I will write and inquire the particulars.”

I said I should be glad if he would do so.

One moonlight evening shortly after this May came in from a walk. Mr. Salvotti had said good-night to her at the gate. She came straight to me with the peculiar grace that always characterized her movements, and half-kneeling at my feet, clasped her arms around my neck.

“Anne,” she exclaimed, “I am going to marry Mr. Salvotti. He has asked me to-night. It is to be in three weeks. Neither of us has any relatives to ask, so it will be a quiet ceremony in the church, and a fortnight’s tour away somewhere. Will you mind being left alone? I said I would never leave you alone again. Are you surprised? He has loved me since the first evening he heard me sing.”

“I thought as much. I knew he loved you. Have you been blind all this time? though he has given you a good opportunity to know whether you like him or not.”

“Anne, when we came here I had a queer feeling that I cannot understand even now. I felt that Mr. Salvotti would never marry, and that I should never marry. I was quite content to go on here for ever, being friends.”

“And now?”

“I shall be more than happy to marry him. I think I never could marry any one else. Oh, Anne, I can’t tell you!”

She buried her face in my lap. I took the slender hands in mine, raised the face and kissed away the tears.

“It is too perfect ever to happen. Our thoughts and desires and feelings are so much alike, our love has that rare sweetness in it that people dream about. Only—he has suffered, and I never have. But I can imagine what it would be to have your soul in the grip of some giant anguish.”

Those words aroused my old suspicion.

“But you know very little about him, May, his past or his connections.”

“He has been here four years, and you see how he is respected. We are not going to live in the past. He is quite alone in the world. And, Anne, he said to-night that nothing could change his love for me; that if I were an outcast, if I were under any ban I should still be his. I cannot make you understand the fervour of his love. I can only feel it myself.”

But I think we both understood it before the wedding-day. He did not care now who saw it. He would pick up any little article of hers and press it to his lips; he would come into our shady parlour and play her songs, carry away with him the flowers she wore in her hair. And so the days passed. Few preparations were needed. May made a pretty brown travelling-dress and trimmed her hat to match.

They were to be married on the first of September. When the marriage ceremony was taking place, I did not realize that the service was being said for May. I listened in a strange, solemn mood. The great question was asked them—then there was a pause.

“I have an objection!” said a coarse, breezy voice, and a woman rose.

“Will you state it?” rejoined the clergyman, mildly.

I tried to turn, but felt rooted to the place.

“I am his wife. His true name is Edmund Wentworth. Let him deny it if he can. Here are two witnesses. So I have found you at last! Have I spoiled your plans, my fine gentleman?”

He turned then, giving one look at May’s marble-like face.

“The woman is crazy!” he cried.

“Deny your own brother, if you can!”

There was a moment’s deadly silence. The bridegroom came slowly forward.

“Is it you, George?” he said, in a hollow tone.

“Nay, do not speak; I will confess all. I was not meant for a villain. But when I went out of my old life, to be rid of that woman, I thought to hide myself from you all. I would not disgrace you and my mother and my sisters by a hideous scandal. I wanted to live and die unknown. I gave up wealth and position. Could you not have left me this little remnant of toil in peace? May, my sweet darling, would that I had been smitten with death a month ago ere I ventured to speak. Heaven alone knows how I have loved you, how I have fought with myself. You cannot forgive, I know, but you can pity.”

She held out her hand to him with a sudden sad gesture of entreaty.

He said a few words to the clergyman, drew her arm within his, and then took mine.

“Come home,” he went on, hoarsely. “You shall hear the whole story. Follow me, George.”

“Oh, Heaven!” he cried, “that I should have murdered you in this fashion! If I had dared to tell you the story, or been brave enough to keep silent. Oh, May, my darling! my darling!”

The woman, our third guest, laughed mockingly.

Salvotti faced them fiercely.

“George,” he said, “that woman is not fit to enter this house. It is putting angels and a fiend together!”

“I wish I had let you go on!” the woman retorted. “I was not wise. Bigamy would have been an ugly crime, and ‘my darling’ there would have had no husband, either.”

“Hush!” he thundered. “George, you know something of this miserable marriage, but not the half. Miss Palmer, this is my brother, George Wentworth. We belong to an old, wealthy, aristocratic family. In my early days I was smitten with a passion for the operatic stage, and made several very creditable appearances abroad. I met this woman. She was fascinating then, and flattered my boyish vanity. By what jugglery she contrived to entrap me I never yet understood. I did not intend to marry her. She was ten years my senior, and, as I afterwards found, a woman of tarnished reputation. Well, I found myself married to her. She was so sweet, so tender and humble and devoted that I yielded to the fatal spell; but before six months I had a sad, bitter awakening. At heart she was a domineering, vicious, untruthful woman. Nothing could refine or lift her up permanently. She liked her coarse, vulgar ways the best. She was a rich man’s wife too, and she rushed into every extravagance. Besides this, she was fearfully jealous.”

I wondered how he dared say all this to her face. I liked him the better for his bravery.

“My brother will bear me witness in this. I came home. I took an out-of-the-way country house, and endeavoured to live with her, but it was of no avail. After three miserable years I tried for a divorce, and failed. She was all penitence, tears and hypocrisy. I did succeed after awhile in getting a separation, by paying her a handsome sum. Even this was no comfort, for she followed me everywhere, and made my life a curse to me. Then I disappeared. I wrote to my relatives to consider me as dead. I eluded her vigilance. For two years I was a wanderer on the face of the earth. She had apparently given up the search, but I knew she would watch my relatives closely. I came here under an assumed name. For four years I have had peace and rest. Why could you not let me be?” he turned angrily to her. “You had your money, and I declare to you now the very first time you annoy me I will have you arrested. Come, do your worst. I will move Heaven and earth to get clear of you.”

She laughed shrilly.

“At least,” she said, “I can keep you from marrying. While I live no other woman shall be your legal wife. But I was an idiot! I should have waited until you were coming home from your bridal tour.”

“Thank Heaven that you did not!” he answered, fervently. “And now go! I have explained all that I meant for you to hear. May, Anstice, to-morrow morning I shall ask for one last interview. Oh, my darling, do not let your heart break.”

He hurried the others out of the room, kissed her hand in a passion of despair, and followed them.

I looked at the ghost-like face of my sister, “Don’t talk, Anne,” she said, imploringly. “Help me to bed. I thought people never could be so happy in this world.”

I did as she requested. Indeed, I felt stunned myself. Now and then through the night I glanced at her as she lay in her tearless grief, with her eyes wide open. In the morning she was as weak as a child. I arranged her hair and helped her put on the pretty pale blue wrapper she had made to grace her new home.

It was almost noon when Edmund Wentworth came over. Long afterward May repeated their sad conversation. When he had come to love her so dearly he had not dared to tell her his story, for fear she would deny him even the consolation of friendship. The desire of marriage had been too powerful a temptation for him to resist; at least he had familiarized his mind with it until, loving her as he did, it scarcely seemed a crime. How bitterly he repented no words of his could tell. He was going home with his brother now, and proposed to take his old position in the world. If he could get free from this hateful bond May would hear from him, if not—

We had some calls of curiosity and condolence. Mr. Bradford, our clergyman, was the only person admitted to May’s presence. He was peculiarly interested in the organist, indeed always had been, and pitied his sad fate sincerely.

“I have known of the family for years, and have met one of the married daughters,” he said. “The wife, it seems, persuaded George Wentworth to come, under pretence of saving his brother from a great crime. She is a shrewd and wary woman, and will give him no opportunity for the coveted freedom. It is a sad case. Thank Heaven that you were saved, Miss Palmer!”

I felt that May was not glad, but her heart was so sore that I could not blame her just now.

A new organist came to St. James. May resigned

her position. The story had gone about, and it was too startling for her not to be a heroine. For a month she was too ill and weak from the shock to sit up all day.

"Anstice," she said, one evening, "let us go somewhere. I shall die if I stay here."

"Where, my darling?"

"I don't know. Anywhere. Can we go immediately?"

"As soon as you are able."

She made a great effort, and in a week we were off. We travelled leisurely, and tried to escape the crowd. She wanted to see no one. The quietest hotels were sought out, the most unfrequented ways.

But May did not improve. October passed, and we were well in November.

One morning I found her crying.

"Anstice," she said, "I don't know what we shall do. I have lost my voice. I have never sung a note since that day. I was so happy! Oh, why do miserable people live? And I can never, never go back to Melton."

"No," I said.

I had known that for a long while.

I tried to comfort her. She was sweet and patient, but she had lost all the olden energy.

We were making sad inroads on her small fortune. Something must be done.

Then I bethought myself of my experiment.

Salvotti had once written to his friend and given me the answer.

The gentleman, a Mr. King, said they were continually buying new designs, and that he should like to see mine. He lived in a thriving town, and since we must have a change, why not go there? I could also colour and retouch photographs, so I was sure of finding a little to do.

May made no objection to my plans.

We went at once and procured lodgings. As early as I could I sought an interview with Mr. King, and took a number of my best designs.

He studied me attentively, as well as the drawings. Whenever I spoke he listened in a peculiar manner, as if trying to remember something. It rather embarrassed me.

"These designs are very fair indeed. Some of them will print beautifully. I do not know that I can promise very much employment, but I will do what I can. You are a stranger here, you said. Are you alone?"

"I have one sister."

"Does she design too?"

"She is an invalid now," I said, hurriedly.

After selecting some of the designs he gave me a cheque which appeared to me quite a large sum for so little labour.

I was much elated, and flew back to May.

"I am so glad for both our sakes, Anne," she said, gratefully. "I hope I shall not always be a burden on your hands."

"I take great pleasure in being the business woman of the family," I returned, gaily.

"If we only had a little house—I could keep that, I think."

"We must find one, my dear," and I kissed her tenderly.

We did, after a fortnight of anxious search. I went to Melton and packed our furniture, bade farewell to the friends there, and hurried back to May.

One month in the new year had passed before we were settled. May's fortune had melted to three hundred pounds.

"Never mind," she said, with a smile.

My work did not occupy me half the time, so I cast about for something else, and as the spring opened I found all that I wanted to do.

May frequently accompanied me in my expeditions to Mr. King and on each occasion I fancied that my employer seemed peculiarly gratified by her presence and paid her particular and marked attention.

We soon found that our business relationship with Mr. King had blossomed into friendship, and on that footing we became frequent and welcome visitors at his house.

The pleasant times we had after this roused May wonderfully. She began to hum fragments of old songs, and at last actually sang for her.

Mr. King was a widower, with one little girl. I thought I saw how it would end by-and-bye. May had not forgotten her old love, never would, perhaps, but it was quite hopeless, and if she could form a new tie it would be much happier for her. I liked Mr. King wonderfully.

When one is busy and happy the time flies fast. A year had come and gone, another winter almost. May was bright and cheerful. I a prosperous woman, and a rather proud one—without, to think that I had found such a delightful vocation.

But one afternoon I was more than surprised by an offer of marriage from Mr. King. For a moment my head was giddy. I—but there was May. She did

like him. A second disappointment might shatter her beyond repair.

"You cannot love me, then?" he was saying. "I felt so sure. Laura is so fond of you. She was delighted when I told her to-day. Think again, Anstice."

I would speak for her. No thought of self should stand in the way of her happiness.

"Oh," I cried, "think of May! You have all but taught her to love you. She is younger, sweeter; she—"

The door was flung suddenly open. There was May, pale as marble, but with a look in her face that I shall never forget. She held a paper straight before my eyes, it was a marked paragraph, and I read:

"Died of small-pox, Clara Gervaise, wife of Edmund Wentworth."

"He will come back to me! I have only to wait. Oh, Anstice!"

I trembled violently. A strong arm clasped me, drew me down to the sofa.

"Anstice, can you answer my question?"

"Oh, you love her!" cried May, joyfully.

"I have asked her to be my wife."

May gave him both her hands, and a bright smile. That there should be such happiness in the world for me! I could not believe it at first. Might I take it?

But a year afterward May was married, and my husband gave her away. The Wentworth family are delighted with her. May has regained her voice, but sings only for her husband. A. M. D.

FACETIÆ.

SUGGESTIVE DISTINCTION.—Beggars: "Are you the cook or only the lady of the house?"

A MISTAKE.—The Mayors were feasted at the Mansion House on the Derby Day. The Oaks Day would have been more appropriate. —Punch.

The gas made now is twenty-four candle power; that is, you have to light twenty-four candles to see when the gas is burning.

A CYNICAL LADY. rather inclined to flirt, says most men are like a cold, very easily caught, but very hard to get rid of.

A YOUNG LADY requested to be released from her marriage engagement on the ground that when she contracted it she believed her lover "a duck," but has since found him to be a goose.

"Old age is coming upon me rapidly," as the urban said when he was stealing apples from the old man's garden, and saw the owner coming, whip in hand.

"Ah, ladies," said an old epicure, as he opened a bottle of wine, "what is more delightful than the popping of a champagne cork?" "The popping of the question!" unanimously cried the ladies.

"WHAT," said a teacher to a pupil, "makes you feel uncomfortable after you have done wrong?" "My papa's big leather strap," feelingly replied the boy.

"THE farmer should sow his Ps, keep his Us warm, hive his Bs, kill off the Js, remember what he Os, take care of the Vs, pay all he Os, teach his wife not to Ts, and take his Es."

WITH what sublime resignation are we enabled to sit in church, with all worldly things off our minds, when we are conscious we are better dressed, and are looked at more than anybody else there!

"MR. JONES, what makes my canary sleep on one leg?" "I don't think that anything makes him do it, ma'am; it appears to me that he does it of his own accord."

THE OLD LADY'S EAR.—A deaf old lady being asked if she ever had her ears pierced by the wall of distress, said she couldn't exactly remember, but she believed it was done with a shoemaker's awl.

"WHAT'S your business?" asked a judge of a prisoner at the bar. "Well, I s'pose you might call me a locksmith." "When did you last work at your trade?" "Last night, when I heard a call for the police, I made a bolt for the front door."

"UNCLE JAMES, won't you perform some of those juggling tricks for us to-night that you learned in China?" "No, my dear, I'm not in the vein."

"What vein, uncle?" "Why, the juggler vein, of course."

THOROUGHLY RESPECTABLE.

"Well, I think you will suit me. What is your name?"

"Shakespeare, ma'am; but no relation to the play-actor of that name." —Punch.

"OH, Mary! my heart is breaking," said an Aberdeen lover to his Highland Mary. "Is it, indeed. So much the better for you," was her quiet reply. "Why, my idol?" "Because, Mr. McSmith, when it's broken out and out, you can sell the pieces for gun-flints."

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—"It is a settled principle, your worship," said an eminent lawyer, "that causes

always produce effects." "They always do for the lawyers," blandly responded the judge; "but I've sometimes known a single cause to deprive a client of all his effects."

"YOUR future husband seems very exacting; he has been stipulating for all sorts of things," said a mother to her daughter, who was on the point of being married. "Never mind, mamma," said the affectionate girl, who was already dressed for the wedding, "these are his last wishes."

"DID I not give you a flogging the other day?" said a schoolmaster to a trembling boy. "Yes, sir," answered the boy. "Well, what does the Scriptures say upon the subject?" "I don't know, sir," said the other, "except it is in that passage which says, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

A MAN named Hogg, who had been found guilty of murder, laid claim to some relationship with the judge about to sentence him, whose name was Bacon. "I think you are mistaken," blandly responded the judge. "Hog must be hung before it can be good Bacon."

SMITH can't see why his wife should object to his staying at the club so late, simply because he said when he came home the other night, "My dear, it's the coldest year for many nights, at fifteen degrees past ten the clock stood sixteen minutes below freeze."

A COOL CARD.

Swell (handing "Sporting Life" to Clerical Party): "Aw—would you—aw—do me the favour to read the list of the 'wases' to me while we're wunning down?—I've—aw—forgotten my eyeglass. Don't mind waising your voice—I'm pweicious deaf!" —Punch.

INCONSISTENT.

Landlord (German): "I hope you have a good appetite, sir."

Guest: "Stop right there. Don't you think it rather inconsistent to wish a fellow a good appetite when you send him an atom like that for a steak?"

DOMESTIC.—Keep your wife at home, if you can—that is, if you have a home for her; if not, make it your first effort to furnish her with a home. It is so profit to a woman to be running about the neighbourhood she lives in, acquiring habits of idleness and to the neglect of her domestic duties. One of the best ways for a man to keep his wife at home is to stay at home himself.

A PRESCRIPTION.

Doctor: "Yes, there is the remedy; you must steal a horse."

Patient: "Steal a—what the deuce do you mean?"

Doctor: "I mean that you must manage to get into goal, where the diet will bring you round; I don't see any other chance for you."

NEITHER.—A Dutchman once met an Irishman on a lonely highway. As they met, each smiled, thinking he knew the other. Pat, on seeing his mistake, remarked, with a look of disappointment, "Faith, an' I thought it was you, an' then you thought it was me, an' it's another of us." The Dutchman replied, "Yaw, dat is thrue; I am anoder man, and you is not yourself; we po both some other podies."

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

Chief Clerk of Government Office (to youthful and rather rapid subordinate): "Oh, Mr. Scatterbrains, I am given to understand that the day after tomorrow is the Derby Day, and I must therefore request, as a favour, that you will take some medicines and other necessary precautions to avoid the recurrence of one of those bilious attacks from which you suffered last year." —Judy.

GYMNASTICS.—A "gawky" saw, for the first time, a school-girl going through some of her gymnastic exercises for the amusement of the little ones at home. After gazing at her with a look of interest and commiseration for a while, he asked a boy near by, "If that girl had fits?" "No," replied the lad, contemptuously, "that's gymnastics." "Oh, 'tis, eh?" said the verdant; "how 'long has she had 'em?"

THE HOME-MADE CIGAR.

Justice of P.: "You admit then that you stole the plaintiff's cigars, the kind he sells?"

Prisoner: "Yes, yer worship."

J.: "What did you do with them, did you sell them or give them away?"

Prisoner: "No, yer worship; I smoked them."

J.: "Smoked them! good heavens! let the man go; he has been punished enough."

NIAGARA.—We once read the opinion of a Western drover expressed on a first view of Niagara Falls. After looking at them half a minute, he remarked, "Them's nice falls; let's go up and look at the town." This was about as cool a remark as could be made; but there is something more exquisitely dull in the story of the English cockney who recently returned from a trip to America. He had seen the

falls, and was asked, of course, what he thought of them. "They're quite 'andsome," he replied; "quite so—but they didn't quite hanser my expectations—besides, I got vetted, and lost my 'at."

AN ADROIT COMPLIMENT.

Mr. Sweetly: "I have been greatly charmed by your friend the postess. You do not write, I suppose?"

Miss Rosey (a little hurt): "Why not, you think I am too?"

Mr. Sweetly (adroitly): "Oh, only the ugly women write and the uglier they are the better they (mollified) do it."

Miss Rosey: "Well, it is true; I have never tried yet."

NOT SO EASILY.—One pleasant day last summer I took my seat in the coach bound for Brighton. Among the passengers was a little gentleman, who had possibly seen five summers. The coach being quite full, he sat on the lap of another passenger. While on the way something was said about pick-pockets, and soon the conversation became general on that interesting subject. The gentleman who was holding our young friend remarked: "My fine fellow, how easy I could pick your pocket!" "No, you couldn't," replied he; "I've been looking out for you all the time!"

DODGING A HATTER.

An individual purchased a hat in a shop kept by a tradesman by the name of Dodgion. The article was got in the absence of the proprietor, and the purchaser left the shop, entirely forgetting (by mistake, of course) to pay for the aforesaid "tit." The tradesman, upon hearing the facts, started after him in hot pursuit. Upon overhauling him the following scene occurred:

"See here, sir, I wish to speak to you."

"Move on."

"I am Dodgion, the hatter."

"That's my fix."

"I tell you I am Dodgion, the hatter."

"So am I; I'm dodgin' the hatter too—and very likely we are both dodgin' the same chap."

The scene ended with a "striking" tableau, in which Mr. Diddler found himself considerably "mixed up" with "Dodgion, the hatter."

AN INDISCREET PARTIZAN.

At a political meeting, the speaker and audience were very much disturbed by a man who constantly called for Mr. Henry. Whenever a new speaker came on, this man bawled out, "Mr. Henry! Henry! Henry! I call for Mr. Henry!"

After several interruptions of this kind at each speech, a young man ascended the platform, and was soon airing his eloquence in magnificent style, striking out powerfully in his gestures, when the old cry was heard for Mr. Henry.

Putting his hand to his mouth like a speaking-trumpet, this man was bawling out at the top of his voice, "Mr. Henry! Henry! Henry! I call for Mr. Henry to make a speech."

The chairman now rose, and remarked that it would oblige the audience if the gentleman would refrain from any further calling for Mr. Henry, as that gentleman was now speaking.

"Is that Mr. Henry?" said the disturber of the meeting. "Thunder! that can't be Mr. Henry! Why, that's he that told me to holler."

HOW TO BOIL EGGS.

Says I, "Mary, an egg to suit me must be boiled just two minutes, and you may boil me six this morning."

That girl did boil 'em, and I broke the crust on 'em, and they were so hard that if they had been shot out of a gun they would have gone clear through an elephant. I expostulated with Mary.

Says I, "Mary, how long did you boil those eggs?"

Says she, "Just twelve minutes by the clock."

Says I? Didn't I tell you that an egg to suit me must be boiled just two minutes?"

Says she, "Yes; and ain't there six of 'em, sure?" and begorra, if twelve minutes ain't two minutes to an egg, it's meself that can't count straight at all at all."

I told Mary, "she could put on her bonnet and take a vacation. When I wanted her I would send for her." That was ten years ago. I haven't sent for her yet. The next girl I had I gave the same directions to. When she made a mistake one morning and boiled 'em hard she said she'd only boiled 'em two minutes. I asked her how they came to boil hard in two minutes. She said the clock ran slow.

At a recent trial an Aberdeen young lady got into the witness-box to be examined, when the following conversation took place between her and the opposing counsel:—Counsel: "How old are you?" Miss Jane: "Oh, well, sir, I am an unmarried woman, and dinna think it right to answer that question." The Judge: "Oh, yes, answer the gentleman how

old you are." Miss Jane: "Well-a-well, I am fifty." Counsel: "Are you not more?" Miss Jane: "Well, I am sixty." The inquisitive lawyer still farther asked if she had any hopes of getting married, to which Miss Jane replied: "Well, sir, I wina tell a falsehood; I henna lost hope yet;" and she scornfully added, "but I widna marry you, for I am quite tired o' your palaver already."

WORTH KNOWING.

Newly-ordained Deacon: "I suppose you generally make longer coats for men who hold extreme views?"

Clerical Tailor: "Well, sir, they do generally prefer a long coat; but with that coat, I assure you, you may hold any views you like!"

"SEPARATION."

WHEN John first went away, my dear,

I thought my heart would break,

And nothing in or out the house

Could stop its weary ache.

The lump was always in my throat,

The tears were in my eyes,

And everywhere I walked or rode

Was just a Bridge of Sighs.

But when the letters came, my dear,

Such comfort filled my heart,

It didn't seem that John and I

Were miles and miles apart.

I used to read them o'er and o'er,

Until each blessed word

Was written out upon the air:

We girls are so absurd!

He told me all about his plans,

About his daily life,

And what he'd do, and wouldn't do,

When I became his wife.

While I, with equal confidence,

Imparted all my store,

And even told the colours of

The ribbons that I wore.

But absence worked a change in him,

As 'twill in many men,

And in my heart I felt the sword

That rested on the pen—

The first dark prophecy of pain,

The cruel, rankling dart,

That one may cast without a thought

To wound another's heart.

He pleaded business as excuse

For letters few and brief,

And I, believing in his love,

Would not give way to grief.

For nothing conquers love so soon

As these poor, jealous fears,

That with insidious clutch uproot

The confidence of years.

And so I kept my loyal heart

At odds with discontent,

That John might find me when he came

As true as when he went.

'Twas but a year he stayed away—

A little while, my dear—

And yet what changes move within

The compass of a year!

He had no need to speak a word—

'Twas written on his face;

There was no love-light in his eye,

No love in his embraces.

And by the nameless agony

That wrenched my faithful heart

I knew that John and I were then

A thousand miles apart.

J. P.

GEMS.

CONFIDENCE may not be reciprocal, but Kindness should be.

He who can at all times sacrifice pleasure to duty approaches sublimity.

The envious man is made gloomy not only by his own cloud, but by another man's sunshine.

WORKING and thinking should go together, the thinker working, and the worker thinking.

It is a pity that those who taught us to talk did not also teach us when to hold our tongue.

SINCERITY does not consist of speaking your mind on all occasions, but in doing it when silence would be censurable and falsehood inexcusable.

The most criminal of all men is he who takes advantage of unsuspecting confidence to work out any ends but those for which that confidence was given in full faith.

The more people do, the more they can do; he that does nothing renders himself incapable to do anything; whilst we are executing one work, we are preparing ourselves to undertake another.

If we would have a powerful mind, we must

think; if we would have faithful hearts, we must love; if we would have strong muscles, we must labour. These include all that is valuable in life.

IN the voyage of life a man may be wrecked as is a ship. Conscience, however, is an anchor that will in most circumstances insure him safety. It is to be remembered, nevertheless, that, like the anchor, conscience may be carried away, and so ensue ruin and wreck.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO DYE LEATHER BLUE-BLACK.—Take of bees-wax 3 oz., black resin 2 oz. Melt together, and then add: Prussian blue 1 oz., lampblack $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. While the mixture is cooling, add turpentine till a suitable consistency is obtained. It should be applied with a soft rag, and the leather afterwards polished with a brush.

A LARGE bakehouse at Bradfordshire was some years ago infested with crickets. As hot weather came on the nuisance became very serious, for crickets were to be found in every possible crevice. The baker was advised to lay some rhubarb leaves about the place. The light of the next morning revealed nibbled leaves and myriads of dead crickets; and this was the last of them in that bakehouse.

FLUID EXTRACT OF CHESTNUT LEAVES.—Dr. J. Eisenmann, of Vienna, has experimented with a fluid extract made from the leaves of the European variety of castanea vesca, as a remedy for whooping cough which had but recently entered into the spasmodic stage, and in which the subsequent course of the disease could be well ascertained. The results were so favourable that the author calls the attention of European physicians to this remedy.

MERINGUE PUDDING.—Put a teaspoonful of rice to one pint of water; when the water is boiled out, add one pint of milk, a piece of butter the size of an egg, and the yolks of three eggs; beat the yolks into the grated rind of one lemon, and mix with the rice; butter a pudding dish, pour in the mixture, and bake lightly. Beat the whites of the eggs with one teaspoon of sugar, and the juice of one lemon. When the pudding is nearly done, spread on the frosting, and bake it a light brown in a slow oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

This year's Derby was worth 5,350*l*., and the Oaks 5,400*l*.

The French Academy has fixed that its poetry prize for 1875 shall be given for the best composition on Livingstone.

NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE is being shown prior to being taken down. It may interest antiquarians to learn that very little of the old house remains, the greater part having been built in the last century.

GEORGE FREDERICK, who has just carried off the Blue Riband of the Turf from nineteen other competitors, is named after the little Prince, the second son of the Prince of Wales, whose birthday falls on the very day—June 3rd!

SERPENTS IN INDIA.—The Bay of Bengal is swarming with the ordinary sea-snake. A mate of the "Algerie," 10-gun brig, was killed upon the station in 1838. The circumstance is alluded to in the beautiful work upon "Indian snakes" by Dr. Fayer.

It is said that a fresco, attributed to Titian, has been discovered in the Château de Malpaga, near Bergamo, representing a visit paid, in 1454, by Christian the First, King of Denmark, at the Château, to B. Colleoni, the condottiere, whose statue by Verocchio is so well known in Venice.

EXPERIMENTS with a new flying machine are appointed to take place at the Crystal Palace. The little engine attached to the apparatus is said to be equal to 4-horse power, and to be able to raise a weight of 40lb. The liveliest interest is taken in the undertaking by the patrons of aerial navigation.

It is stated that the marriage of the Princess Louise, eldest daughter of the King and the Queen of the Belgians, with the Duke Philip of Saxony, will take place at Brussels towards the end of August. Great fêtes will be given at Brussels to celebrate the event.

BICYCLING EXTRAORDINARY.—Two Bristol gentlemen recently travelled from London to Bristol, via Oxford, on bicycles, a distance of 130 miles; leaving the Marble Arch, Hyde Park, at 12.30 a.m., and reaching Bristol at 8.50 p.m., thus doing the distance in 14 hours, 20 minutes, exclusive of six hours' waiting on the journey.

The Ashantee King is too much for us. He has sent down a "tenner" in gold for his second instalment. A correspondent writes as follows:—"The King of Ashantee has sent down to Cape Coast another portion of the indemnity, but so absurdly small that the governor has indignantly refused to accept it."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BEATRICE G.—No charge is made.
J. C. H.—We cannot reply to you through the post-office.
CORPORAL B.—We have no knowledge of the custom mentioned in your letter.
EDITH and NELLIE.—You should each write on separate sheets of paper and thus make known your desires.
GIPSY KIT.—If the announcement is not too highly coloured to provoke a smile, it is sufficiently coloured to render its insertion undesirable.
O. J. M. (Birmingham).—The original numbers are—first, second, third, and so on, in distinction to the cardinal numbers—one, two, three.
NELLIE (Tipton).—The handwriting appears to be that of a lady; if this is so, there is a confusion in the reply which renders the insertion problematical.
WILLIAM F. (Sheffield).—The verses, though not a specimen of a high style of the art, are on the whole very fairly written.
LOUISE.—We believe that any depilatory which is efficacious will, in the hands of an amateur, injure the skin. Your better course is to consult a surgeon.
JANE S. D.—An anodyne medicine is a medicine which has the power to mitigate pain. An anæsthetic medicine is a similar sort of thing. Chloroform affords a good illustration of both the above phrases.
SAMUEL J.—Your handwriting is remarkably good, and exactly suited to the purpose named. With influential introductions you would probably command a salary of from 80l. to 100l. a year in the position specified.
A CONSTANT READER (Liverpool).—Lemon juice thickened with a small quantity of powdered borax is a compound which has been found serviceable in the removal of freckles from the face. The face and other parts affected should be bathed with the lotion three times a day.
MARY ANNE (Linton).—Carking care means a very distressing and long continued anxiety. We should say that the adjective or participle is not redundant; true it is that cark is just another word, a Saxon word, for care, but the repetition emphasizes, and emphasis is not superfluous.
B. M. B.—The state dress worn by a cardinal of the Church of Rome is a red soutane, a rochet, a short purple mantle and a red hat. A cardinal should be addressed by the title of "eminence," and is an ecclesiastical prince in the Romish Church, having a voice in the conclave at the election of a pope, who is chosen from amongst the cardinals.
J. A.—In the game of chess the board should be so placed between the two players that each of them may have a white corner at his right hand. This manner of placing the board, though not essential to the game, is invariably observed. "Sequitur regina colorem" is a Latin phrase signifying that in placing the pieces on the chess-board the queen should be put on a square of her own colour.
A NORTHERNER.—The name of Mohammed's first wife was Kadijah. He was twenty-five years old when he married her and during her lifetime had no other wife. The burst of feeling by which he was overcome when, years after, he alluded to her death is well known. He said: "There never can be a better! She believed in me when men despised me, she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world."
VIRGINIE.—The celebrated painting of the "Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci, may be seen, that is what remains of it, in Milan. The work is in fresco, on one of the walls of the refectory of the Dominican convent attached to the church of Santa Maria della Grazie. The damp has destroyed the beauty of the colours which in some places have peeled off and in others are covered with mould.
NELL.—The particular battery of the Royal Artillery referred to in your letter is not mentioned in the list of troops reviewed before the Emperor of Russia at Woolwich on the 20th of May last. Probably before that time it arrived at the northern town to which you allude. By writing a reply to the letter sent you, more exact knowledge of any one in whom you are interested might be obtained; any letter so written should contain an address to which the post-office could return the letter in case of need.
M. E. M.—It strikes us that the verses entitled "Home to the Sister Isle" are not suitable for publication. There is a wordiness about them which is very dreary and uninteresting to everybody, we should say; the author and the author's friends of course excepted. Those fearful subjects of many a poet's theme "Remorse" and "Memory" seem in the instance before us to be treated very fantastically and cavalierly, and every other matter has

a dreadful symptom of unreality. Heigho! if remorse could be obliterated by a forty-eight hours' journey, how pleased would railway shareholders be—at all events for a time.

GWENDA. 1. As a rule a young lady should not shake hands upon her introduction to a gentleman; she should merely bend in a graceful manner. 2. When walking with a lady, a gentleman should place her on the inside or on whichever side is the least inconvenient to her; it should be his endeavour to shield her from discomfort of any kind. 3. The name Rosanna signifies "gracious and beautiful," and might be given to a refined beauty who is as good as she is exquisite, that is, to a lady whose face, whose form, whose features and whose disposition are very nearly perfect in their way.

EDITH.—We do not recommend the use of hair-dyes; to this gentle protest, however, we append the particulars for which you wrote. The dye is composed of equal parts of litharge and lime well mixed and formed into a paste, not too thick, with water if a black colour is needed, with milk for brown. The preparation of the hair to receive the dye and the application of the dye should be as follows: Wash the hair with soda and water, then put the paste on the hair in a similar way to that in which you apply a pomade to the body and wear an oil-skin nightcap while you are in bed. In the morning carefully brush the powder out of the hair, which should then be nicely oiled.

F. C. G. jun.—By all means try to learn to swim, it is a health-giving as well as an useful accomplishment. Of course you will consult your parents about the matter, and you can inform them that tuition in swimming is now given gratuitously by the London Swimming Club. If you write to the secretary of the club stating your desire to learn to swim, and at the same time send him your address written on a postal wrapper, you will have a ticket returned to you entitling you to instruction at the hands of one of the honorary instructors of the club. The address of the club is Little Queen Street, Storey's Gate, Westminster.

THE SHELL.

I picked the bright shell from the shore,
Where waves meet golden sand,
And mute its pink lips seemed to be
While holding it in hand;
But when I placed it to my ear,
Its whispers came to me
Of coral homes, 'mid fairy scenes
Beneath the sobbing sea.

Long mused I o'er the mystic shell,
Translating from its song,
A soft, exquisite harmony
From voices that are gone,
And when I placed it back again
'Mid shells upon the shore,
Its cadence softly died away
Like loved tones heard no more.

Oh! fairy shell, thy cold pink lips
Bring back a love to me,
With songs as strangely beautiful
As that which came from thee.
And, as thy whispers tell of scenes
Too fair for mortal eye,
So, unknown to all, we hold
A love that cannot die.

C. C. C.

LIZY.—1. A young lady can certainly be well educated without the aid of a boarding-school, provided she enjoys the advantages of an efficient governess and able masters at home. Indeed boarding-schools for girls are to be deprecated in the same proportion as in the case of boys they should be commended. 2. To try what buttermilk would do for your complexion would be at least a harmless experiment; we cannot say anything more favourable on the subject. 3. If a gentleman salutes a lady to whom he has not been introduced he does so at his peril; the lady may or may not respond, as she deems best. 4. You write very nicely.

EVER.—The voyage to Calcutta by a sailing ship, that is by one which has no steam power, and which does not take the Suez Canal route, but makes the passage by way of the Cape of Good Hope, occupies about ninety days. The voyage there and back by this route is frequently made in something under eight months, even by ordinary merchant vessels, including the time taken to unload and reload their cargoes. This circumstance is one of the many which mark the great progress which has been made in nautical skill and enterprise during the present century. Some years ago a voyage to India and back occupied about a couple of years.

A CORNISH FISHERMAN.—Men occupied in the seal fishery undergo more than the usual share of privation and hardship, and it would not be advisable for you to exchange your mode of life for that of a "sealer" without great consideration, even if you have the opportunity. The Heard Islands are in the Antarctic Ocean and are one of the places where the catching of seals is carried on. Some forty men are distributed about the largest island for this purpose. This island is very lofty and picturesque, glaciers from it descending to the sea on all its sides. The sealers live in hermetically-closed houses runken in the ground for warmth and protection from the winds. The men are divided into small, detached parties, each party having a well-defined hunting-ground on which it watches for the seal coming ashore. The principal men are natives of America, and think themselves lucky at the expiration of the three years for which they ship, each individual returning home with fifty pounds in his pocket.

A LITTLE FARMER.—1. From the particulars sent we gather that it is improbable you will grow taller, and should say that your stature is below the medium height. 2. Bessie is usually considered a pretty name; it is one of the many diminutives of Elizabeth, which is derived from the Hebrew and signifies a worshipper of God. 3. You could shake hands with a gentleman if he is cordially introduced to you by an old friend, but if the introduction is merely a matter of ceremony you should simply bow. 4. Of course you would only go to such evening parties as meet with the approval of your family and nearest friends, in which case you might safely accept

the escort home provided for you by the host or hostess. 5. You should consult a doctor about the pain in the chest, and take his opinion as to whether dancing is injurious or beneficial for you. It is impossible for a stranger to advise. 6. Do not wait longer than ten minutes after the time at which your lover has appointed to meet you, and this only to allow for the difference of clocks. 7. The bean should be older than the belle, but he must have better pretensions than age alone. 8. The age of fifteen is perhaps too young for a girl to wear her hair turned up; surely seventeen or eighteen is early enough to take this first step to womanhood.

LOVING ANNE.—By reason of the peculiar handwriting employed your letter can only be partially deciphered; thus it cannot receive farther attention.

CATTIE, twenty, fair complexion, dark-blue eyes, auburn hair, and very loving. Respondent must be tall, dark and very loving.

LIZIE, seventeen, tall, gray eyes, and light-brown hair, considered pretty, desires to correspond with an officer in the Royal Navy.

CONSTANT JACK, 5ft. 7in., twenty, of a dark complexion, handsome, a seaman in the navy, wishes to correspond with an affectionate girl.

UNION JACK, twenty, dark complexion, good looking, and a signalman in the navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

JOLLY JACK, eighteen, black curly hair, the pride of the ship, wishes to correspond with a young lady fond of a loving disposition.

COAL MINER, thirty-six, widower, dark hair and eyes, wishes to correspond with a young woman that is fond of home and children, and loving.

SRUE MOORING, nineteen, 5ft. 7in., of a dark complexion, considered handsome, a seaman in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition.

BOB FROM BOSTON, nineteen, 5ft. 5in., dark-brown hair, blue eyes, a seaman in the navy, of a generous disposition, wishes to correspond with a young lady of a loving disposition and fond of home and children.

A ROBUUST GIRL, nineteen, pretty, well educated, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a tall gentleman, handsome, fond of music, and with a good income; one who has out his wisdom teeth preferred.

VIOLAT, twenty, rather tall, dark eyes and hair, good looking, domesticated and would make a loving wife, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman, tall, dark, good looking, steady and in good circumstances.

ROMFING LOU, seventeen, medium height, hazel eyes, brown hair and well educated, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, handsome gentleman who has a good income and is fond of home.

TOMMYO JACK, twenty-three, 5ft. 3in., in the navy, auburn hair, blue eyes, dark complexion, fond of home and music, and would make a loving husband. Respondent must be between nineteen and twenty-one, of dark complexion, blue eyes, medium height, fond of home, loving and domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LOVING AGGIE is responded to by—"Alf," twenty-three, rather tall, dark and clear complexion.

ENDLESS CHAIN by—"Helen," nineteen, medium height, fair, pretty, very loving, good tempered and fond of home.

JON THE MARINE by—"Stella," eighteen, medium height, a blonde, pretty, musical, affectionate and fond of home.

STARBOARD GANGWAY by—"Faith," tall, very fond of music, rather dark, very handsome, accomplished, has no objection to travel, and thinks she would be all "S. G." requires.

SEMPER FIDELIS by—"Fair Rosamond," nineteen, above the medium height, long golden hair, dark-blue eyes, fair complexion, no freckles, and perfect teeth, entitled to money on her wedding-day, and would like to go abroad.

BRITISH FLAG by—"Matilda," twenty, good looking, pleasant, intelligent, well educated, very fond of home and household duties, thinks she is everything that is required to make a home comfortable. "Matilda" will be entitled to a small income on attaining her twenty-first birthday; and by—"Kitty," dark, good looking and fond of home and children.

PIECE A POUND by—"Alice," eighteen, tall, very nice looking, brown hair and eyes, fond of home, domesticated, is entitled to a sum of money on attaining her twenty-first birthday, and would make a loving and affectionate wife; and by—"Bessie," very slight, fond of housework, has some money, good looking and a teetotaler; would do her best to make a home happy.

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